PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Teodoro sorry for delay to free hostages; AFP says no timetable

By Christian V. Esguerra and Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila and Julie S. Alipala in Zamboanga City

DEFENSE SECRETARY GILBERT TEODORO yesterday apologized for the delay in the release of the three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) aid workers held captive by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Jolo, Sulu, since Jan. 15.

But the Armed Forces' Chief of Staff
TEODORO A14

Hollywood's PDI man pays tribute to Natasha Richardson
ENTERTAINMENT / H4

Pentagon sees China military on the rise
WORLD / A26

METRO / A23
Woman jumps in front of LRT train, suffers only cuts

PINOY ON ICE The Philippines' Michael Dimaliwat may have finished 58th among 58 competitors. But, hey, this was the World Figure Skating Championships at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, and a qualifying tournament for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. And Dimaliwat, who comes from a country where ice is found only in the fridge, glided with the world's best. He earned the right to represent the country after dominating last year's National Open at SM Mall of Asia
A1

Nograles now leads Cha-cha

Speaker to file Con-ass resolution in April

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE CAT IS OUT OF THE bag, but President Macapagal-Arroyo has so far ignored a clamor to knock it down.

Speaker Prospero Nograles yesterday said he had received a draft resolution with 175 signatures calling for the convening of a constituent assembly (Con-ass) to amend the Constitution.

Nograles said he intended to file the measure drafted by Cotabato Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte when Congress reconvenes April 13 after a roughly two-week break.

"The resolution of Villafuerte is now in my hands, he turned it over to me. So I have decided to file it because it has 175 signatures already," Nograles said. He said he himself had signed it.

Malacañang is officially staying away from the House move, insisting that Charter change (Cha-cha) is "dead" as far as the President is concerned.

"Congress can do whatever they want under their mandate. We will respect their decision,"
MALACAÑANG A6

Teodoro asserts independence from Danding party
NEWS / A22

TOP COP Rodrigo is the pride of her family. Rose Marie Bacuqia tops her "Katarungang" Class of 2009, the first female valedictorian since the Bachelor of Science in Public Safety became a four-year course at the Philippine National Police Academy. Her father is also in the force. Supt. Restituto Bacuqia, with mother Pilla. The couple have two other sons in the service. Youngest brother tries on big sister's cop hat for size.

JOB WATCH

GMA: Lifeline, training, incentives for jobless

By Christian V. Esguerra and Raniel W. Dominguez

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has announced an incentive for workers who lost their jobs in the electronics industry.

Ms Arroyo said some firms had agreed to continue paying at least half of the minimum wage of their displaced workers to help see them through the crisis.

"They [some [the] electronics [industry] will come back. They don't want to lose their workers. They'd like to keep them on their payroll if they can, even if they're not really working," she told reporters in San Jose, Batangas on Wednesday.

Ms Arroyo said "the idea is to pay them half of the minimum wage while they are training."

For workers in general who lost their jobs, they may get a lifeline should a proposal of Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ralph G. Recto be adopted.

Recto is seeking a monthly unemployment insurance of P10,000 for each laid-off worker. To cover 100,000 workers for six months, P6 billion may be needed, he said.

Up to 200,000 Filipino workers, many of them in the electronics and garment industries, could lose their jobs in the first six months of the year because of the huge drop in demand for Philippine exports, the labor secretary has predicted.
GMA-LIFELINE A20

Kidnappers in cops' uniforms grab Alabang kids at checkpoint

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE ARMED MEN WHO KIDnapped two high school students in Tagaig City last week were wearing police uniforms and standing at a checkpoint when they stopped the victims' sport utility van.

The vehicle of the victims was flagged down by men who posed as policemen at a checkpoint on C-5 road at around 7 in the morning [of March 19], a police source yesterday told the Inquirer.

The kidnappers, who were carrying high-powered firearms, commandeered the SUV that was found abandoned in Quezon City later that day, said the source, who requested anonymity for lack of authority to speak publicly on the matter.

The source said the local police should be investigated because the kidnapping happened within their jurisdiction.

"Local checkpoints are monitored and areas are listed in the tactical operation centers," he said, adding:

"Kidnappings are now on the upsurge because it's the election period."
KIDNAPPERS A14

HUGELY DIFFERENT Over at the Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, San Agustin, Isabela Mayor Virgilio Padilla is mighty proud of his outsized carabaos (weighing 750 kilos), produced by crossbreeding under the Carabao Upgrading Program. Today, the mighty beasts will take center stage for the launching of three books about their development, to mark the 17th anniversary of the Philippine Carabao Center.

'SUPER CARABAOS'

A whole lot more of beef, milk

By Anneliza Roque
Inquirer General Duties

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—Mike may be the country's super carabaos.

At the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) here, the male carabao (water buffalo) weighs 750 kilograms and standing, while the female carabao yields 17 to 20 liters of milk a day, according to Dr. Liberando Cruz, the center's executive director.

These carabaos will be the center of attraction today during the launching of three books on the carabao development program to celebrate the PCC's 17th anniversary.

Although Cruz was reluctant to call them "super carabaos," the water buffaloes at the grain pool here look hugely different from the
SUPER CARABAOS A14

Cocks and Balls give way to Wangs in UK

LONDON—THE NUMBER of people in Britain with surnames like Cockshott, Balls, Beath and Shuttlebottle—likely the source of schoolroom laughter—has declined by up to 75 percent in the last century.

A study found that the number of people with the name Cock shrank to 788 last year from 3,211 in 1881, those called Balls fell to 1,299 from 2,904 and
COCKS A20

After holding press con, Obama goes on 'Web con'

WASHINGTON—CALL IT Round Two of the news conference, with a big Internet twist.

President Barack Obama took questions from the White House press corps on Tuesday in a prime-time East Room session that represented the most formal and time-honored of president-and-reporter interactions.

On Thursday, Obama is taking to that same room for another public grilling—this time by regular folks armed with questions submitted via the Internet and in person, as part of a political strategy to engage Americans directly.

"It's a way for the president to do what he enjoys doing out on the road, but space on gas," Press Secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters on Wednesday.

Obama used the Internet to build a grass-roots movement that delivered the presidency and raised unheard-of money. Now in power, he is employing
AFTER A20

Panlilio group asks Roxas to join US-style primaries

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SEN. MAR ROXAS II BEING asked to join a US-style populist contest that will select the standard-bearer of a political reform movement in the 2010 presidential election.

Governors Eddie Panlilio of Pampanga and Grace Padaca of Isabela are among those who are being encouraged to participate in a television process similar to a primary, the system for choosing the presidential candidates of the Republicans and Democrats in the United States.

Roxas, Panlilio and Padaca were scheduled to meet last night at the Roxas residence, called "Bahay na Puti" (White House), in Quezon City.

Harvey Keh, head convenor of Kaya Natin!, told the Inquirer yesterday that the meeting was arranged by Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo, one of the founders of the movement for good governance and ethical leadership.

Keh said that the objective of the meeting was to invite Roxas, who also plans to run for president, to subject himself to the primary process.

He said that third-party groups like those of Alex Lacson, who wrote the popular "12 Little Things every Filipino Can Do to Help our Country," Fr. Carmelo Diola of the Gibo-based Dilaab Foundation and Bro. Eli Gonzaga's Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan had en-
PANLILIO A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUERTRES* 7 3 3 | 4 1 7 | 2 1 7
SIX DIGIT* 0 4 4 | 5 1 1
SUPERLOTTO 6/49 2 5 17 35 43 48
P23,655,751.20

GMA orders PNP: Stop media killings

NY committee report, threats to Davao broadcaster spur action

HEAVILY CRITICIZED OVER A NUMBER OF UNRESOLVED political killings since she came to power, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday gave an explicit order to the Philippine National Police: Stop the killing of journalists.

Specifically, the President ordered Police Director Jesus Verzosa to protect Davao broadcaster Eldon Balmores, who had received death threats for leading the military to the murders of a contractor-foreigner's daughter.

"We must bring political killings to zero, including assassinations of government officials and media personalities," she said in a speech before the 2009 graduation of the Philippine National Police Academy in Silang, Cavite.

The order came just days after the New Sticker-based Commission to Protect Journalists placed the Philippines on a list of countries where media personnel are allegedly killed with impunity.

Text messages

Dionisio, news director for Radio Mindanao Network's dxDC station in Davao City, reported receiving a series of threatening text messages during his "Tinuod" saga Radio [The Real Story]" program.

VERZOSA Reviews order

PITAO Ignored action

He told the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility that the threats could have come from the military or he had exposed military abuses in Davao. The military has denied this.

Dionisio and his colleagues at RMN previously reported that the Army was linked to the abduction and murder of the daughter of Leoncio Pitao, also known as Commander Parago of the communist New People's Army.

Pitao's daughter, Rebelyn Pitao, was abducted and found dead earlier this month in a Davao del Norte town.

"This morning, I talked to General Verzosa, and I said that Doctor Broadcaster Eldon Balmores should be offered police protection and the text [messages] threatening him should be investigated," the President said in her speech.

Rare opportunity

She reminded the newly commissioned police, jail and fire inspectors that their toughest challenge was keeping the public safe.

"Our people have given you the rare opportunity to develop your own potential. Go earn and give back what you received by keeping the people safe," she said.

The NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has been waging a guerrilla insurgency for 40 years, funded by extortion money from local businesses and politicians.

A 2007 report by the top UN expert on extrajudicial killings found that the military was in a "state of denial," after the Army said many deaths were the result of internal purges in the communist ranks. TJ Burgonio with AFP

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The Housing & Land Use Regulatory Board through its Bids and Awards Committee, invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of security services and/or janitorial services.

Name of Project	1. SECURITY SERVICES AND 2. JANITORIAL SERVICES
Location & Contact No.	Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Malaysian cor. Mayaman St., Diliman, Quezon City, www.hlurb.gov.ph, Tel No. 924-3672
Procurement Mode	Public Bidding (competitive bidding)
Delivery Period	12 Months
Bid Price Approval	

Lot No.	Particulars	Quantity	Approved Budget for Lot
1	Security Services	3 shifts/7 (24) guards	Php 1,000,000
2	Janitorial Services	12 janitors 1 Supervisor	Php 1,000,000

Bidding will be conducted through competitive bidding as a two-one sobre bidding procedure/ prequalification as mentioned in Republic Act 9184 (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is extended to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183), and subject to commensurate tax (C.T.). Only those from Bidders who submitted eligibility documentation opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Bidding Documents, hereinafter referred to as "BD". The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo to the post-qualification steps in order to finally determine compliance of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The Lowest Bid Price as indicated in the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification process.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the HLURB BAC Secretariat. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount mentioned in the instructions to bidders. Late bids shall not be accepted.

HLURB reserves the rights to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

The Schedule of Activities is listed activities:

A) FOR SECURITY SERVICES

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULES
1. Advertisement of IB/EOI	27 March 2009
2. Issuance of bidding documents	27 March 2009 Diliman, Q.C. (Secretariat Office) Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Malaysian cor. Mayaman St., Diliman, Q.C.
3. Pre-bid conference (Mandatory Attendance of Bidders is required)	31 March 2009 9:00 AM, HLURB Board Room
4. Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements and issuance thereof to you	30 May 2009 4:30 PM HLURB, HLURB, Q.C.
5. Opening of eligibility requirements, acceptance, screening of bidders and opening of bids	30 May 2009 9:00 AM, HLURB Board Room

B) FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULES
1. Advertisement of IB/EOI	27 March 2009
2. Issuance of bidding documents	27 March 2009 Diliman, Q.C. (Secretariat Office) Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Malaysian cor. Mayaman St., Diliman, Q.C.
3. Pre-bid conference (Mandatory Attendance of Bidders is required)	31 March 2009 9:00 AM, HLURB Board Room
4. Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements and issuance thereof to you	30 May 2009 4:30 PM HLURB, HLURB, Q.C.
5. Opening of eligibility requirements, acceptance, screening of bidders and opening of bids	30 May 2009 9:00 AM, HLURB Board Room

Bid Documents will be available only to bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PHP 2,000 to one or all of Lots 1 & 2 to the Housing & Land Use Regulatory Board Cashier.

APPROVED:

ATTY. WILFREDO M. CAPRIL, JR.
BAC Chair

Former mayor gets 10 yrs in jail

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has sentenced a former mayor of Iriga, Cebu, to up to 10 years in prison for an anomalous P6.84-million land deal he entered through as the top executive official of the city.

The antigraft court's First Division convicted former Iriga Mayor Oscar Jaro of graft and sentenced him for buying a 2.96-hectare property in 2000 for a grossly disadvantageous price despite opposition from the long-standing Bayan, or municipal council.

"By paying for the subject property using municipal funds without proper documentation and without any authority given by the Sangguniang Bayan, Jaro... arrogated the power of the [municipal council] to appropriate," said the court ruling penned by Associate Justice Alexander Gesmundo.

Three other defendants, former municipal accountant Ofelia Bongalonta, and the private property owners, Antonio and Lory Venachin, were acquitted for lack of evidence.

The court said Chief Legal Officer Gerardo Gonzaga of the Sangguniang Bayan was responsible for an "efficient and effective system of garbage collection and disposal."

The Jaro municipal council, however, ruled against Jaro's plan to use the property as a dump because the area was unsuitable for the purpose, it noted. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Barring hitch, Mancao home by Tuesday–Gonzalez

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

FORMER POLICE OFFICIAL CEZAR MANCAO II, a suspect in the murder of a public relations executive and his driver, is expected to arrive from the United States on Tuesday, unless there is a change in plans by US authorities in charge of his extradition, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

"He should be home by Tuesday. But, what I am repeating, but we don't control US authorities and we have yet to receive an official notice," Gonzalez told reporters yesterday.

Mancao, a Forum central superintendent and aide to then national police chief Sen. Panfilo Lacson, fled to the US in 2001, presumably to evade trial for the murder of businessman Bubby Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in 2000.

He recently executed an affidavit implicating Lacson, former President Joseph Estrada and Makati Rep Aquilino Pimentel III, also a former police senior superintendent, in the double murder.

Gonzalez said he was confident Mancao would not make any move to derail his extradition, unlike Glenn Dundon, another former police senior superintendent and Lacson aide, who is in New York and who suddenly fled Ecuador—and was granted—a writ of injunction and habeas corpus to stop his extradition. Dundon was supposed to have been extradited last Sunday.

The justice secretary said he had instructed Bureau of Corrections director and former national police chief Oscar Calderon to fly to New York last Sunday to monitor the extradition of Mancao and Dundon.

"Calderon is our shere to bring Mancao home. He is not authorized to do so. He is not the lawyer," Gonzalez said.

Calderon was also sent to the US on Feb. 14 in connection with the extradition of Mancao's affidavit, Gonzalez disclosed, adding that the prison official was Mancao's godfather.

Gonzalez said the US Marshall's Office will take Mancao, who is being held in Florida, to Los Angeles where National Bureau of Investigation agents will be waiting to bring him home.

Mancao will be detained at the NBI office in Manila.

Gonzalez said he looked forward to Mancao's extradition, as he expected the former police official to testify on the masterminds and perpetrators of the crime.

"I feel vindicated and confident that the matter pursues will soon come to an end," the secretary said. "I hope this will also clarify reports that incoming military intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Ruben Pantaleon was trying to pressure Mancao into implicating Lacson. From the very beginning, Ms. Mancao had always said they wanted to settle in the US. If Mancao comes home to testify, we will help clean a mess in the US."

He denied Lacson's claim that Mancao had been promoted commissioner in the Philippine National Police if he implicated his former superior.

Apart from Mancao and Dundon, the government is also seeking the extradition of Aquino. But he would first have to finish serving a 42-year prison sentence for espionage before he could be extradited.

In 2007, Aquino pled guilty to the unauthorized possession of US defense department documents. Mancao, on the other hand, was arrested as a material witness against Aquino in an espionage case in 2006, but he was released on bail.

GMA exhorts gov't execs to tighten belts for savings

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERday called for "belt-tightening" in government to make available more funds for expanding jobs programs and subsidies for the poor.

Ms. Arroyo said the government must be able to provide information to help the private sector generate jobs and to help the poor by subsidizing prices of food, fuel and rice.

"How do we find all these? The answer is, cut government waste. In challenging economic times, the government must tighten and live within its means just like the average Filipino household," she said.

"It's the part of government, we must live within our means and run a lean and efficient government. This includes continued fiscal prudence on the part of every agency," she added.

The President gave the message during the graduation of police cadets of the Philippine Retirement Police Academy (PNPA) in Silang, Cavite, where she was the main organizer.

Ms. Arroyo had earlier issued an executive order directing government departments and agencies to cut under 1.5 percent of their maintenance overhead and operating expenses (MOOE) to save up to P7 billion.

"Savings from the P80OOE shall be allocated to emergency employment for the next six months," she said.

But apart from this, Ms Arroyo said, there were practical ways by which departments and agencies could cut back on "unnecessary spending."

They include turning off air conditioners by 4:30 p.m., using compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) instead of incandescent bulbs, and converting the engines of 20 percent of government vehicles to those that use cost-fossil fuels, she said.

"We should start with our police vehicles," she added.

Ms Arroyo also said that police cars and fire trucks owned remain in the garage on weekends and holidays, and their keys should be kept unless they had to be used for official trips.

"Government vehicles used by officials under Cabinet rank may not have security plates unless there is imminent danger in the lives of the official involved," she said.

Ms Arroyo asked the Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Bureau of Fire Protection, and PNPA to pool all savings and revenues into programs that would help the poor and middle class.

"I am reserving all police ranks including the PNPA to also spend part of your savings for providing textbooks to the classroom, preschool and grade one children in the schools nearest your camps," she said.

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marie france

10 local, foreign firms join bid for poll automation

By Kristine L. Alave

TEN FOLLOW) AND INFORMation technology firms, all but two of them foreign, seek to supply the automation machines for the 2010 presidential and national elections, according to the Commission on Elections.

The Comelec yesterday identified the companies that bought bid documents, or PI million each, for the P11.3-billion automation contract last week as: Total Information Management and Smartmatic-TIM Joint Venture Corp. and Sumitomo-DAS Philippines and Samsung-Indra Systems SA Universal Securities Services Co. and Sequoia-AES Dominion International Inc.; Election Systems & Software Inc.; Smartmatic International Corp.; Election Technologies Venezuela Ltd.; AMA Computer College-Parañaque City; Hart InterCivic Inc.; Global Election Systems Inc.; Microsoft Corp.; Unisys Philippines; and Avante International Technology Inc.

Comelec Chairman Jose Melo said the bidders were given until April 6 to submit their proposals.

Melo said the poll body would award the contract to the bidder that would meet the requirements of the law and the Comelec's technical specifications.

"We will not award the contract to the lowest bidder. We will award the contract to the bidder that will meet the requirements of the law and the technical specifications," Melo said.

Melo said the Comelec would not accept bidders that would only lease the machines to the government.

"We will not accept lease. We will buy the machines," he said.

Melo said the Comelec would also require the bidders to provide source codes for the machines.

"We will require the source codes. We will require the machines to be delivered to us by Dec. 31, 2009

Changes likely to $700-M balance of payments surplus

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) said the $700-million surplus in the country's balance of payments (BOP) that is projected for the year would likely be reversed, citing the weakening of the peso and taking into account a current drop in export earnings seen since December.

"Right now, the projection is still at $700 million, but we are reviewing the latest data and will consider them in updating the projection," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in a briefing yesterday.

An indicator of a country's liquidity, the BOP is the difference between the foreign-currency inflows and outflows in the country.

Buenaventura said the fact that exports had plunged year-on-year by over 40 percent both in December and January necessitated a review of official projections. Under the government's current projections, the country's exports would drop by only 0.01 percent this year.

But industry players have indicated that the fall in exports this year could be worse than expected because of the continued recession in the United States and Europe—two of the biggest export markets of the Philippines.

"My [BSP] are consulting with industry groups to validate export numbers. I suppose we will change the projection," Buenaventura said.

Last year, exports dropped 2.6 percent year-on-year. Analysts blamed the slowdown on the global economy led by the contractions in advanced economies for the uneven export performance.

Demand for electronics, the Philippines' major export product, led the decline in exports. Analysts said it was expected that demand for electronic goods in the U.S. as consumers continually cut back spending as economists's during a time of crisis.

Speculations that exports would be worse this year worsened from projections that the US and European economies would plunge deeper into recession.

Meanwhile, the central bank said it was expecting remittances to register a flat growth this year from last year's $14.4 billion. Such an amount would be enough to help sustain growth in consumption, which is remains economic growth driver.

The BSP said that one out of ten Filipino households had an OFW member.

Citing data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, BSP Director Francisco Sicat said in the sense having that deployment of Filipinos to overseas jobs will hit over 10 percent in January.

"But last that deployment was still at double-digit levels gives us some comfort that remittances will somehow be stable," Sicat said.

Although there had been job cuts in the United States, the BSP said other latest markets were opening up for Filipino workers.

The BSP said it would also consider other factors in revising the BOP forecast for the year. These include recent actuals, which is seen to be adversely affected by the global financial, foreign direct investments, and foreign portfolio investments.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 11, 2005
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Wis 2:1a, 12-22
Gospel: Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Jesus went around Galilee for he could not go about in Judea because the Jews wanted to kill him. Now the Jewish feast of the Tents was at hand. But after his brothers had gone to the festival, he also went up, not openly but in secret.

Some of the people of Jerusalem said, "Is this not the man they want to kill? And here he is speaking openly, and they don't say a thing to him! Can it be that the rulers have come to realize he is really the Christ? We do know where this man comes from; but when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." So Jesus announced in a loud voice in the Temple court, where he was teaching, "You do know me, and you know where I come from! I have not come of myself; I was sent by the One who is true, and you don't know him. I know him because I come from and he sent me."

They would have seized him, but no one laid hands on him because his hour had not yet come.

Commentary

The leaders of the temple were disgusted when they found there was no prospect of worldly advantages to come from Jesus. Jesus proclaimed aloud that they were in error in their thoughts about his origin. So we see in St. John, and also the decision that they did not know God, after his claims to preceding Christendom, influenced them. The conflict between the proclamation of his doctrine and miracles, while those who heard him denied not speak out openly in submission of him. While originally people sometimes could take to counsel them, employed in the work of God, they only ever advise what appears likely to promote advantages for them. Thus, when both rule by which will lead to apostasy that are found. Amidst the disputes which distract the world, from persons such to decide will of God, who shall know whether the doctrine is of God, or whether it is evil. We simply issue our judgments by their outward appearance, but by those words confer the gifts and graces of God's Spirit to them.

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Worst yet to come for RP, says UN economic body

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY'S ability to avoid the contagion of the global economic crisis has been eroded by its dependence on exports, but remittances from overseas Filipino workers may mitigate this, according to a United Nations report.

The report, however, is yet to come, as the economy is expected to grow by no more than three percent this year, and the Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific 2009, published by the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escap).

As a result of the global financial crisis, the Philippine economy grew at a noticeably slower rate in 2008, at 4.6 percent, against 7.2 percent in 2007, said the Escap report, "Addressing Triple Threats to Development," which was released yesterday to more than 20 cities across the region and in New York and Geneva.

The report projected the three global crises which have occurred to threaten development in the Asia-Pacific—the economic crisis, fuel and food price volatility and climate change.

Exports' sharp contraction

It said the slowdown in economic growth in the Philippines was a result of a sharp contraction of exports that started in the last quarter of 2008, particularly of electronics which had been badly hit by the recession in the United States and other industrialized countries.

While domestic demand did not fall as sharply, the growth in private consumption, gross fixed investment and public consumption was slower in 2008 than the year before, the report said.

A bright spot in this gloomy picture, however, has been the increase in money sent home by OFWs.

In 2008, remittances totalled $16.4 billion, 13.7 percent higher than in 2007. But the growth rate in remittances decelerated to 0.1 percent in January 2009 compared to the same time last year, reflecting the impact of the recession on OFWs in the US.

Noting that the government had announced a fiscal stimulus package of P328 billion, or 4.6 percent of GDP, Escap said fiscal resources were limited and increased budget deficits would eventually need to be addressed.

It said stimulus packages should be an opportunity to not only reinvigorate the economy in the short term, but address long-term issues by investing in food and energy security, social safety nets, disaster risk reduction, and green technology.

"It is thus critical to be selective in the use of public funds. In particular, spending on policies that promote the long-term sustainability of energy and food markets, as well as spending that addresses the deficiencies of current social protection systems, are a valuable investment for the future while helping to support domestic demand in the short run," Escap said.

Regional perspective

Headquartered in Bangkok, Escap is the largest of the UN's five regional commissions and is the only intergovernmental forum covering the entire Asia-Pacific region.

The report provided a regional perspective as well as country-specific analysis, outlining ways in which the region's economies could move forward toward a more inclusive and sustainable growth path.

The report pointed out that the triple crises were interlinked and were actually reinforcing the impacts of each.

It noted that the number of the poor in Asia-Pacific—already two-thirds of the global total—was likely to increase as a result of the economic crisis and rising unemployment.

"Impacts of the crises have hit the world's poor the hardest. It is clear that a more inclusive model for economic growth is required to address their needs," Dr Noeleen Heyzer, Escap executive secretary, stressed in a statement.

"This requires setting up social protection systems that increase income security and free up the spending power of middle and lower income people who drive the economy," she said.

Dr Heyzer said the report's findings and recommendations would serve as a guide to policymakers "through the uncertain times ahead." Cynthia D. Balana

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Lower hunger rate due to gov't schemes—Yap

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE said an independent survey showing a significant drop in hunger incidence in Filipino families in the past three months proved the efficiency of the government's food security programs.

According to the latest Social Weather Stations quarterly survey commissioned by a business newspaper, hunger incidence dropped significantly from 23.7 percent to 10.3 percent in the three months from December 2008 to February 2009.

The positive results of this quarterly tracking poll by the SWS "will serve as a strong impetus for the (department) and its attached agencies to further step up the implementation of their food security and safety-net programs," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap in a statement.

Yap then cited another report released by Makabayang sandiling the substantial drop in hunger incidence to outcome government initiatives like the National Food Authority's food for school program, under which one kilogram of rice each is distributed to more than 3.5 million schoolchildren and their families.

The Makabayang report also cited the agriculture department's Pinggan ninang Gulayan Para sa Masa, which it said had fed close to two million families. It also cited the establishment of 217 barangay logistics, or food terminals, in Metro Manila and other regions, which sell rice, vegetables, fruit, meat and fish at low prices to poor families.

Appropriate time

Yap said the positive SWS survey results came at "an appropriate time" as the National Food Summit will mark its first year on April 4. On that date last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo rolled out an ambitious food security and sufficiency program dubbed Pinggan.

PINGAN stands for fertilizer, irrigation, education and training of farmers and fisherfolk, loans, dryers and other post-harvest facilities, and credit.

The SWS reported that the number of Filipino households that experienced severe hunger decreased from 5.2 percent (about 960,000 families) to 4.4 percent (down to 810,000 families). Those that experienced moderate hunger declined from 18.5 percent (3.3 million) to 11.1 percent (2 million families).

The survey showed that overall hunger is now lowest in Mindanao, which showed a decline of 22 points from a record 23.7 percent (estimated 1.4 million families) last December to 11.7 percent (estimated 690,000 families) in February.

Hunger incidence declined by six points in Metro Manila, from a record 23.3 percent (estimated 570,000 families) to 17.3 percent (estimated 430,000 families); by five points in the rest of Luzon, from 20 percent (estimated 3.6 million families) to 15 percent (estimated 2.8 million families); and by one point in the Visayas, from 10.7 percent (estimated 700,000 families) to 9.7 percent (estimated 730,000 families). Nestle T. Ochoa

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Defense witness turns tables on Trillanes et al.

By Alilson W. Lopez

THE BESTLAID PLANS OF THE defense in the coup d'état trial of Sen. Antonio Trillanes et al. were derailed when a defense witness, a "subaltern" of Trillanes at the Philippine Military Academy, testified that some 2Lt. classmates did take part in the takeover of the Oakwood Premier Hotel in the failed coup of July 2003.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Josephus Magdangal was called to as a witness to support the accused officers' claim that they were only "airing their grievances."

But Magdangal, a former aide-de-camp of President Macapagal-Arroyo, instead related his encounter with the group of "fully armed and combat" officers during the attempted coup, which came to be known as the Oakwood mutiny.

"I asked them what they wanted. They told me, 'Pumaike ang mga tao ni Pilar bos (the President may have to step down).' I believe they were asking for the President to step down," Magdangal told during cross-examination.

Mehrael Fadullon, the accused chief state prosecutor, said the defense "blindsided" in calling no-rebelling witnesses like Magdangal, who had facilitated a meeting between Trillanes, one of the alleged ringleaders, and the President two months before the attempted coup on July 27.

"Did they actually think that Magdangal would say something favorable to them?" he said.

Defense lawyers Romulo Macalintal Jr. repeatedly objected when the line of questioning veered from his strategy, but Makati Judge Oscar Pimentel overruled him.

Magdangal, of PMA Class 1995, said he went to Oakwood at the Ayala Center with several classmates to help negotiate the surrender of the mutineers.

When he was asked why he was ordered to go to Oakwood, he seemed amazed of the request.

Magdangal also described the front of the Oakwood hotel as having been "ripped with bombs," in the dismay of the defense lawyers.

Fadullon said the defense game plan was to present witnesses to prove that the soldiers were at Oakwood merely to air their grievances.

"He (Francisco) offered this witness (Magdangal) to prove that no coup d'état took place. And yet here was his witness saying he saw bombs. It was not a party," said Fadullon.

He said Magdangal's testimony destroyed the defense's claim that the July 27 incident was a "spontaneous gathering for the purpose of airing grievances."

The accused officers had claimed that they took over the Oakwood hotel because they were driven to mutiny by the President's supposed "inaction" on the grievances they presented to her at their July 13 meeting.

Fadullon said the claim that the President ignored their grievances was absurd because Mr Arroyo would not possibly end the corruption in two weeks.

Fadullon said the prosecution should not be blamed if Magdangal's testimony lacked favorable to the prosecution.

"They cannot fault us if we tried to capitalize on the witness being there. We are not prevented from cross-examining the witness for as long as the questions are all are relevant to the issue we are discussing," he said.

Pimentel granted a defense lawyers' motion to treat their "witness," or recall of Magdangal, to May 19, saying they needed time to prepare to cross-examine the witness Magdangal had called.

But Fadullon noted that the prosecution would still have a chance to "re-cross," first h, cross-examine the witness again.

A total of 31 junior officers, who styled themselves as the "Magdalo" group, were charged with coup d'etat in connection with the July 2003 incident. But only 32, including Trillanes, are on trial. Nine officers pleaded guilty to the crime of coup d'etat and were pardoned.

Nograles now leads Charter change

From page A1

Undersecretary Anthony Golez, deputy presidential spokesperson, told reporters.

Mr. Arroyo has not taken a public position on the House of Representatives' initiative despite calls by the opposition for her to squarely back the issue. But members on Tuesday said Executive Sec. Manuel Villar said that the Hidalgo's resolution was only 20 votes shy of the magic number of 197.

Asked if he expected more signatures in the resolution yesterday, Nograles said: "We'll fill like it as it is."

Hidalgo's fax said he was seeking 197 signatures to the resolution. This is the number, he said, required by the Constitution to effect Cha-cha with the Senate and the House of Representatives voting jointly.

The Senate, which has dismissed the House initiative, contends that the constitutional mandate for a constituent assembly to institute changes in the Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of each of the chambers voting separately.

Expect a great debate

A challenge in the Supreme Court by the Senate is expected if the House approves the Villafuerte resolution.

Nograles did not openly reject the resolution's proponents. Critics said that it seeks to subject the parliamentary or federal system that will effectively extend Ms Arroyo's term, due to end in June 2010.

The President's son, Rep. Mikey Arroyo, said that the reelection ban can not call for a postponement of the 2010 balloting or extension of sitting elective officials.

"You see there will be a great debate on the floor. Let's just wait for it. All of these things will come out. That's the reason why his purpose of interpassivity, so that there would not be a lot of innuendos on what this is, let's just put it on the floor so that all those will come out. I think that's the best thing we can do," Nograles said.

He spoke at a press conference a day after former Speaker Jose de Venecia announced that he had turned down an offer by Malacañang to support him if he would get the Villafuerte resolution approved—a claim the President's son denied.

Once filed, the measure would have to be approved by the committee on constitutional amendments, Nograles said.

'Not lapdogs'

Nograles said he had a separate resolution seeking to amend the economic provisions of the Constitution, although it did not specify the needs to be amended when Cha-cha.

The President also said in vetoing her resolution and that of Villafuerte to be tackled at the same time. "They are pro-cause to each other," he said. "The question is how do you really amend the Constitution."

He added that he hopes the issue would be brought to the Supreme Court so that it could finally settle once and for all how the modes of Charter change work.

Nograles also said that Malacañang had no hand in any Cha-cha push in the House.

He said he had spoken with the President numerous times and the "never, never, never" talked to him or pressured him about the initiative.

"I was not elected to push Cha-cha. That was never a precondition to my campaign promises," he said. "We are just supporters of the administration.

NOGRALES: It is now in my hands.

VILLAFUERTE: Resolution now has 173 signatures.

ARROYO: It doesn't postpone elections.

We're not lapdogs. We're not in a little pigsty."

Not for Mikey to offer

Nograles dismissed De Venecia's claim that Mikey was out to oust him after he led the effort to install him in February 2008 when the Pangasinan representative was dislodged after his executive was exposed shenanigans in the ZTE-DTE deal.

"Let me say again for the record that the membership is not for Mikey to offer. We are elected by our peers," Nograles said. "If (De Venecia) wants the membership again, then he has to fight for it and get the votes."

Nograles conceded that the passage of the P1.1.3 billion budget for automated elections next year and the earlier filing for certificates of candidacies "may spur the timetable for (Cha-cha."

"We have to make a concerted effort and open[ing] of our mind together with leaders of the party, leaders of the coalition," Nograles said. "That question can only be answered when Congress opens. I cannot answer it now," he said.

Batasan Minus Pres. Teodoro Casiño said he would ask the House ethics committee to investigate the "indecent proposal" that Mikey and Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez reportedly made to De Venecia.

'Black propaganda'

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said that claims hitting Ms Arroyo to Cha-cha were mere "black propaganda."

"The fact that the administration created a march committee to screen candidacies for president, vice president and senator is proof that the issue of Charter change is dead," he said.

"This will go straight to court," Sen. Mar Roxas said, stressing that the move to amend the Charter now would pierce disastrous issue it would pit the Senate against the House.

"I'm confident that our Supreme Court magistrates will exercise independence and make the correct ruling on the issue," Roxas said, dismissing speculation that with vacancies to the 15-member tribunal to be filled by Ms Arroyo is ruling could be issued favorable to the President.

Said Sen. Loren Legarda: "The House amending the Constitution without Senate concurrence is illegal, immoral and unconstitutional."

But Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that Cojuangco-reelection, including himself, were qualified to run for elective positions next year. "This is the best proof that I have will be elections next year," Villafuerte from Michael Lim Ehua, Christine F. Zaguirre, TJ Burgonio, Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

RP bet finishes dead last in world ice skating championship

By Dennis Erasa

THERE WERE NO SURPRISES as Filipino skater Michael Dominick finished dead last among 50 competitors in the men's short program of the World Figure Skating Championships on Wednesday at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California.

The 23-year-old Binalonan scored 27.53 points in the tournament, which featured the world's top skaters.

Sanctioned by the International Skating Union (ISU), the competition was a qualifying tournament for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada.

Binalonan, who is based in the United States, failed to gain valuable votes to the Winter Games but will have another chance to qualify this November in Germany.

Only the top 24 finishers in the worlds would qualify for the Games.

Dimalanta entered the eight to represent the country after ruling last year's National Open at the SM Mall of Asia.

Still to see action for the country is finishes Jeanne Tan who will also try to nail an Olympic slot.

Like Dimalanta, 19-year-old Tan is a veterans of various international competitions. Both skaters are members of the ISU and Philippine Olympic Committee-organized Philippine Skating Union headed by Bo Cornadigan.

Both skaters are also being supported by SM.

Tan, who is based in Los Angeles, made it to the world figure skating championships for finishing in the top 24 of last year's Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Vancouver.

Binalonan's surprise placed him far behind the winning 84.40 mark of gold medalist Brian Joubert of France.

American Ice Dean Lysacek took the silver with 82.70 points. Canadian Patrick Chan settled for the bronze with 82.20 points.

Two skaters made it to the Top 10, with Japanese Takahiko Kozuka (79.35 points) placing fifth and compatriot Nobunari Oda (78.49 points) seventh spot.

Another Japanese, Tatsuki Machida, drew in 11th spot with 70.35 points.

TOP GUNS President Arroyo poses for a souvenir photo with the winners of the Ten Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (TOPS) at the Palace after the awarding ceremonies. From left are Lt. Col. Lope Dagos, S/Sgt. Feliz Delara, M/Sgt. Ramon Jandigan, Col. Ramon Farales, Dean Prof. Jose Clara Rojazo Calayan, T/Sgt. Ramon Calaguian, Col. Benjamin Pedilla, S/Sgt. Ben Acevedo, T/Sgt. Salvador Benavidez, Col. Pedro Intervas Zamila of the Jags. (Story on Page A11.)

WOMAN POWER President Arroyo receives the silt-female honor guard of the Philippine National Police Academy upon her arrival there for her graduation rites in Silang, Cavite.

Panlilio group asks Roxas to join US-style primaries

From page A1

pressed interest in organizing the primary process.

"They will create the process. And then we will go to different groups and see who they would want to represent them in primaries for example, if there were Governor Padaca, Rava Xavier and our other allied groups will rally around him. We hope to finish the process by July," Reh said.

Uniting reform groups

Panlilio, a Catholic priest, captured the Pilipinas' imagination in 2007 when he wrested the governorship of Pampanga from Gov. Mark Lapid and Board Member Lilia Pineda, both of alleged "turncoat" fame Rodolfo "Boy" Rimando.

Padaca, a former broadcast journalist, won the governorship of Isabela over the Dy family, which has lorded it over Isabela politics for four decades.

"What we want is to unite the reform-constituency and Senator Roxas is allied with many reform groups and many of our friends. We are all working for a common cause, that is why we would want him to join the nomination process," Reh said.

"I'll be content not the winner in the nominations process, then we will support him."

Reh said in a phone interview that Sen. Eddie Villanueva of the Bagong Pilipinas party had been invited to join the process. He told Villanueva would first consult with his party.

Villanueva, head of the Jesus Is Lord Movement, ran for president in 2004. He is expected to announce another bid for the presidency on March 28.

Pledges of support

Reh said that Kiko Nolet continued to receive pledges of support for a Panlilio-Padaca ticket in 2010, bolstering his belief that the silent majority of Filipinos "resenting political change in 2010" were starting to speak out.

"I just got this e-mail from somebody from Dubai who asked me to accept his humble pledge of P20,000. He said it was a sacrifice he had to make to help bring about new politics," Reh recounted.

"Another person from Bulacan offered the last set of his battered cell for the reform movement," he said. "What these are telling me is that there really is a constituency and that so-called silent majority wants change."

Panlilio, 55, has been in office for just under two years, but he has been lauded for raising government revenues in Pampanga, including a two-fold increase in takings from the scrutinously corrupt small quarrying operations in the area.

"If we can project ourselves well and we have a platform that is appealing to the people, if we become close to the people and they believe in us ... it will reach on the wildfire," said Panlilio, who has said he is open to entering the presidency but has not made up his mind.

Embracing advocacy

"But if we fail to do this, if the people do not embrace our advocacy, then this will fizzle out," Panlilio told Reuters.

Dressed in a well-worn white polo shirt and brown slacks, the governor comes across in sharp contrast to other prospective candidates, who include four senators, the defense secretary and the Vice President.

Roxas, student groups and civil society organizations are backing Panlilio, and tagged he ran with Padaca as his vice presidential candidate.

Panlilio and Padaca are regarded as untouchable and combative and analysts say their popularity is a reflection of public disgust at corruption in the administration of Ms Arroyo and of her predecessor, ex-President Joseph Estrada. With a report from Reuters

HEAVY STUFF Cristobal of the hundreds of victims of the Legacy group of companies, Sen. Mar Roxas (far) spoke and reads reps against Cebu de los Angeles in the office of the Makati City Association Prosecutor Jennifer B. Barrameda-Reyes.

Visit to RP did Chinese kids good

JOSE DE EXIDENTE FROM China's earthquake-ravaged Sichuan province have written President Macapagal-Arroyo to thank her for their "unforgettable" week-long visit to the Philippines early this year as part of efforts to help them recover from their ordeal, the Philippine Embassy in Beijing said yesterday.

In a dispatch to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Ambassador to China Sonia Brady said the handwritten letter signed by the students expressed their gratitude for the reception they got in Malacañang.

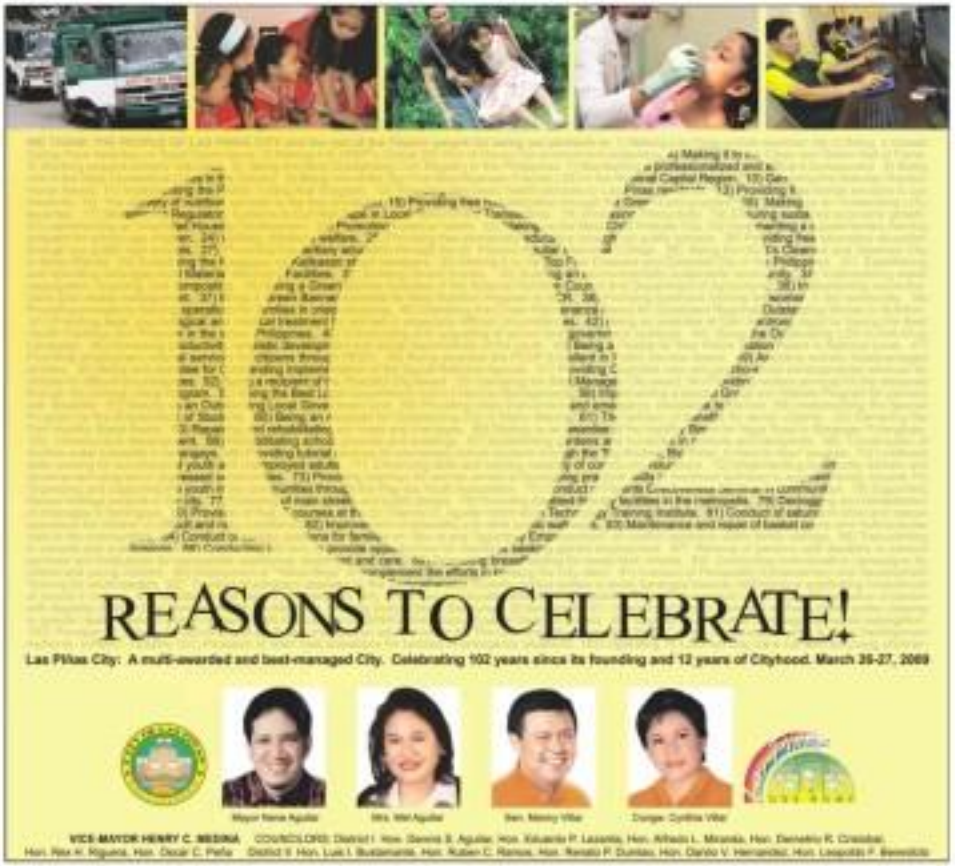
The students were from Chengdu in Sichuan—which the President visited—that was struck by a severe earthquake on May 12, 2008.

Ms Arroyo had proposed the visit when she met with Chinese President Hu Jintao during the Beijing Olympics in August 2008, Brady said.

The students told President Arroyo they would always cherish the friendship and warm hospitality they received during their stay. (1)-(7) ibid.

"Our thankful feeling may hardly be expressed in words," they said. "We were impressed by the beautiful cities, the hardworking people. We will study even harder so that we can rebuild our (homes) and promote friendly relations between our two countries."

Aside from meeting the President, the students visited museums, schools, science centers and Bohol. Cynthia D. Balloso



Teodoro says sorry for delay in release of Sulu hostages

From page A1

Alexander Aleta said the government was not setting a timetable for the hostages' release.

"I am asking for our people's forgiveness and understanding," he said in Filipino as it is private funding in Mindanao. "It's not easy to work under this situation because we are dealing with an irrational organization."

Teodoro said the governments of Italy and Switzerland were naturally "very concerned about the plight" of their nationals—Eugenio Vagni and Andreas Notter, respectively. The third hostage is Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba.

"But I'm thankful that they understand the difficulty of the situation and have supported our efforts to secure the release of the hostages," he said.

President Rodrigo Duterte has directed the government negotiators to "exert and exhaust all measures to ensure the safe release of the hostages," according to Teodoro.

He said Mr. Duterte wanted "a speedy resolution" but was aware of "the balance that needs to be done, which is to ensure the hostages' safety."

Abu Sayyaf commander Alhabsi Misaji has demanded that government troops withdraw from areas near where the hostages were holding out.

Early this week, he gave the government until March 31 to pull back its troops as one of the hostages would be beheaded.

'Time running out'

Lacaba yesterday called on the government to move quickly.

"Please tell them (the government) that if they can help, to make it faster because time is running out on us," she told ABS-CBN television by mobile phone.

Lacaba said she and her colleagues were afraid for their time "every minute, every second, because we don't know when a firefight will suddenly start."

She also said the three of them sometimes had nothing to eat because their captors were busy eluding the pursuing troops.

According to Lacaba, the hostages heard gunfire and explosions just above their heads last week, after Misaji's subjects fired on the bandits' vessel to launch a hasty military ambush.

The episode sparked two days of clashes that killed three Marines and up to seven bandits.

The hostages' nerve was battered, but Misaji later demurred to kill all three if another clash erupted or if the military reached them before the deadline.

NEW POLITICAL PAIRING President Arroyo and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro shake their way to the Kasal Ceremonial Hall at the Palace for the conferment of the TOPS awards on Thursday. AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Time is running out

In the same interview with ANC television anchor Ging Parad appeared his earlier promise to free a hostage if troops moved further away and to behead one if they did not.

"They know I do what I say," he said.

Fundraising for 2010

Said Teodoro at the press briefing: "I don't see any point this thing that can be gained by the Abu Sayyaf if they make good their threat to behead the hostages. It would not do anybody any good."

He also said the government had not ruled out the possibility that some local officials might be involved in kidnappings in the south, and that these activities could be aimed at raising funds for the 2010 elections.

"There could be some connection ... We are uncertain, but we cannot do anything about it without concrete evidence," he said.

"And first things first: We have to secure the safe release of the hostages ... We will deal with the problem later, when we have [a] pressing matter to be [attended to]."

No timetable

As the same briefing, Teodoro said the government was "trying to explore all possibilities of possible actions to recover the hostages safely."

Then said the government was not setting a timetable to recover Lacaba, Notter and Vagni.

"We have continued to maintain the pressure within the vicinity," he said.

"We have seen to it that there would be no offensive action on the part of the government troops at this time ... We will [give] time and space to allow peaceful measures to be undertaken."

No pullout

On the phone from Jolo, Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo, the newly appointed spokesperson for the hostage crisis, said the military was continuing to assess the bandits' demand because, he pointed out, to give in would be to virtually disarm the local soldiers.

"We have repositioned our troops as [the bandits] had demanded," Arevalo said, adding:

"There is no need for us to pull out any further. We are virtually giving them 92 percent of Jolo."

Logical consequence

The Associated Press quoted Arevalo as also saying that the troops might be forced to launch an assault if the bandits harmed the hostages.

"It may sound as threat, but actually it isn't. It is but a logical consequence of what they might do," he said. "If they'll harm or kill the hostages, they will remove the reason for us to talk to them."

Lt. Gen. Ruben Alfiler, the highest ranking military commander involved in the ground operations to rescue the hostages' release, also said the military was not pulling out.

"The troops are staying put, awaiting further advice of developments, because we have observed that the Abu Sayyaf is becoming weaker, is disintegrating and under pressure," he said.

'Problem is the media'

Reacting to Lacaba's plea, Brig. Gen. Gualberto Fetalino, one of the military officials authorized to speak on the matter, yesterday expressed hope that the hostage crisis would be resolved before the March 31 "deadline" set by the bandits for the safe release of troops.

But he said the media were adding to the pressure being brought to bear on the military.

"We were told [of deadline] ... because [some] of the media broadcasting themselves are near or [are] live there and [are] in contact by the negotiating team. But the problem is the media, which clutches the presence on us," Pangalinan, the chief of the military's Civil Relations Service, told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, where he was attending a luncheon meeting.

He agreed to speak with the reporters but refused to talk about the kidnapping, saying his children were traumatized by the experience.

The father said witnesses should report any unusual incident to authorities.

People should report any incident they witness on the road because it might just save lives," he said.

The father also said his advice to parents was not to brandish the windows of the vehicles used by their children.

"Those should be no dark tint so people outside can see what's going on inside the vehicle," he said in Filipino.

Kidnappers in cops' uniforms grab Alabang kids at checkpoint

From page A1

Asked to elaborate on his statement, the source said: "It's an open secret among authorities."

The city government of Taguig has just launched a nationwide, one-stand-circuit television project in connection with its intensified fight against crime.

The students, who were marched on their way to school, were released five days after their abductors upon their payment of P1.5 million in ransom.

Parked on Quezon Avenue

Their van was found parked in front of a branch of a popular fast-food chain on Quezon Avenue, according to Senior Insp. Roberto Razon, chief investigator of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD).

"The red SUV was recovered by QCPD operatives parked in front of a jollibee outlet," Razon said.

He said the van was not damaged and that all pertinent papers such as the certificate of registration and official receipt were in it: "The kidnappers did not take anything from the SUV. Everything was intact; there was not even a dent."

Razon said his unit learned of the abandoned van from its counterpart in Taguig.

Father's advice

The father of the students was at the QCPD headquarters reading a homeless commander' sentence.

According to Pengilinan, it is "customary" that the media desist from airing threats and demands so as not to affect the decisions of the negotiating team.

To Lacaba's statement that occasionally she and the other hostages had nothing to eat, Pengilinan said the military was not enforcing a food blockade in the area.

Alhaja made a similar denial, rebutting the claim of Senior Supt. Romeo Enriquez Kasilo as Wednesday that a food blockade had been implemented to deprive the 40s Sayyaf of provisions.

New in command

Alhaja, the chief of the Western Mindanao Command, said he was now taking charge of the military operations vice Maj. Gen. Aniceto Sobejana.

Addam has gone on leave, his superiors say it has nothing to do with Sen. Richard Gordon's rise in Senate.

Gordon, the chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, has assailed Addam for purportedly subverting efforts for the release of one of the hostages last last week.

Alhaja said the government should not allow itself to be held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf.

"It's only a threat. Why should we also become their hostage?" he said.

Asked to comment on the hostages' own appeal for the withdrawal of troops from the area, Alhaja said: "What's our goal is that [some government officials and the media] play up the plight of the hostages. I have been saying time and again that the hostages are already down, and that everything they do or say is [a result of being] under duress."

Alhaja said the media and other government officials could help in securing the hostages' release by holding back on information.

He said media interviews with the hostages's sense lessened the control of the military, which was trading up in a bad situation.

Hostages safe

Alhaja said that despite the claims, Lacaba, Notter and Vagni were safe.

He said Chief Supt. Bernardo Serapio Jr., the head of the Western Mindanao police's directorate for integrated police operations, was in charge of the police troops, and that Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan was supervising the Task Force ISKO. With reports from AP and AFP

'Super carabaos:' A whole lot more of beef, milk

From page A1

and ex carabaos.

The native carabaos weigh an average of 350 kg, while the native dairy gives a milk yield of an average of 1.8 liters a day.

"We remind the public, particularly the farmers, to not use here performing animals in our slaughterhouses," Cruz said.

"As they approach them, we want to underscore that they, like many farmers now, can participate in our improved breed of carabaos and open opportunities for themselves to become entrepreneurs."

Beyond draft power

Beyond their draft power, carabaos can help generate income and create jobs, Cruz said.

He said about 3.3 million native and crossbred carabaos in the country were used mainly for draft purposes in sugarcane plantations and rice and corn farms, and for hauling.

"The milk, meat, hide and horn businesses from carabaos are still not yet fully developed," Cruz said.

Prospects for big business

For liquid milk alone, the projected market demand yearly is worth billions of pesos, according to the PCC executive director.

Records showed that in 2009, the country spent $632.43 million (about P30.66 billion) for the importation of 167.66 million kg of milk and milk products.

While the country's milk production (from cows, carabaos and goats) increased from 12.79 million kg in 2006 to 13.33 million kg in 2007, the output in 2009 represented only 23 percent of the liquid milk supply.

The demand for meat, on the other hand, was equivalent to 450,000 head worth P4 billion, Cruz said.

"We can include the hide and horn of the carabaos as also potential sources of big businesses in the country. So there's no doubt that farmers, entrepreneurs and the local economy can ride high on the prospects for business that the carabaos can bring," he said.

Jobs

Cruz also said carabao-sperm pellets could provide jobs for inseminators, veterinarians and veterinary aides, milk processors, milk and delivery men, village-based technicians, and in the case of dairy cooperatives, bookkeepers and office workers.

The PCC, which was established with the passage of Republic Act No. 7307 in 1992, is tasked with conserving, propagating and promoting the carabao as a source of draft animal power, meat, milk and hide.

Carabao Act

It was the declining size, weight and population of the native carabaos that prompted then Sen. Joseph Estrada to sponsor the Carabao Act of 1992.

"Recently, we took it to pursue the genetic transformation of our native carabaos to produce improved breed for draft, milk, meat, hide and horn purposes," Cruz said.

Through the PCC's 12 regional centers and seven satellite stations around the country, technology transfer on the care and production of carabaos, and breeding and encouraging social activities in organizing carabaos as source of draft animal power, meat, milk and hide.

Test-tube technique

The center also uses superovulation, in which biologically refined embryos transfer technology, or the test-tube technique.

"It really takes a long time to produce quality animals from cross breeding. It takes three generations or 21 years to attain 87.5 percent genetic purity for the improved breed of native carabaos," Cruz said.

He said the PCC would continue its selection and culling to improve the breed of carabaos in the country.

'$35-M Marcos fund intact despite Merrill Lynch fall'

By Philip C. Tubeza

DESPITE MERRILL LYNCH'S FINANCIAL woes, the $35 million in Marcos assets deposited with the investment bank are still "intact" and the Philippine human rights victims of the dictator are not giving up on efforts to recover them, according to the chair of Claimants 1081.

"The $35 million is still there. It's still intact. Our lawyers is still working on it quietly. We haven't given up," said Loretta Ann Rosales, who heads Claimants 1081, one of two factions of rights abuse victims who won a judgment against former President Ferdinand Marcos and laid claim to the money.

Merrill Lynch may have suffered from the financial crisis but the money is still there," Rosales, a former party-list representative, said.

The New York-based financial service firm suffered massive losses from the global financial crisis and has been sold to Bank of America.

Dispute over money

The Hawaii court that awarded 9,000 rights victims $2 billion in 1995 is each that they brought against the Marcos heirs subsequently ruled that part of the $2 billion be taken from the $35-million account.

The Philippine government earned the judgment but also claimed the money, arguing that some part of the $35 billion that Marcos stole from the country is said the dispute over the money should be resolved in a Philippine court.

In June 2008, the US Supreme Court junked the Hawaii court ruling awarding the $35 million to the abuse victims.

The Philippine Supreme Court has created a special division to the Sandiganbayan to hear the government case to recover the money after the presiding justice of the antigraft court's first division inhibited himself from hearing the case.

The Supreme Court assigned Sandiganbayan Justice Roderick Ursúa, Rhea de la Cruz and Efrenio Dela Cruz to the special division each Gerardo designated as clerk.

The disputed $35 million grew from an original $2 million deposited with Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith in New York by Arelma Foundation, a dummy Panamanian corporation formed by the Marcoses in 1971.

When the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the government agency tasked with recovering the ill-gotten assets of the Marcos clique, discovered the secret account in 2000, it had grown to $35 million.

In July 2000, the PCGG asked Merrill Lynch to turn over the money account to the Philippine government, purporting that it be placed in escrow in the Philippine National Bank to abide the Sandiganbayan ruled on its ownership.

Merrill Lynch, however, rejected the proposal, saying there were other claimants and asked a US court to resolve the issue.

Besides the rights victims and the government, other claimants include Antonio Roumulez,

Philippine National Bank and the estate of the late Roger Rasul, the terrorist bandit who claimed that Marcos stole a "golden Buddha" he had found.

Help victims of trafficking to Malaysia, gov't urged

By Jerome Aning

A MIGRANT RIGHTS AND ANTI-human smuggling group yesterday called on the government to take serious steps to addressing the illegal recruitment and trafficking of Filipino women to Malaysia where they are made to work as modern-day slaves.

The Rise E. Ople Policy Center made the call after the latest batch of illegal recruitment and trafficking victims arrived in Pampanga on Monday.

The victims included nine women recruited by a Malaysia-based syndicate led by a Mogpo person who uses the alias Alfred Lim.

"The victims have risen their shares. The fault is now in the government's court," said Fortuna Lim her Undersecretary Susan Ople, who heads the center, in a statement.

Ople, daughter of the late Labor Secretary Blas Ople, said the center and the Department of Justice with the support of the Philippine embassy, filed charges against the illegal recruiters in the Philippines and in Malaysia.

The women also filed complaints against the immigration officers who escorted them out of Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga.

Ople said the Department of Foreign Affairs could take up the issue of human trafficking during the next round of joint bilateral consultations with Malaysia.

She also called on the immigration minister at the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur to be "more aggressive" in pursuing the case against Lim in Malaysia.

"We were not informed that Lim had been freed on bail. We only found about it when we met some of the repatriated victims," she said.

Ople said Lim used women, mostly women, in an elaborate scheme to recruit jobless Filipino women who were promised good jobs, quick deployment and the right to satisfy employers if they were unhappy.

"But once the victims arrived in Malaysia, the syndicate confiscated their mobile phones and passports, and pulled their employers. The workers who were retained in Lim by dissatisfied employers were maltreated and abused. So many have been that they worked, the victims didn't get their salaries because the employers would say they had already paid the full amount to Lim," Ople said.

"We urge the government to take this case seriously and to show to the world our strong commitment to end human trafficking and modern-day slavery," the center said.

Lebanese traders appeal OFW ban

By Kristine L. Alave

LEBANESE BUSINESSMEN HAVE appealed to the Philippine government to allow Filipinos to work in Lebanon as the Middle Eastern country is in need of thousands of workers.

Abdul Kader Al Jaalil, president of the Filipino-Lebanese Friendship Community, has called on the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to immediately lift the deployment ban on overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) which was imposed at the height of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in 2006.

"The DOLE should see to this opportunity pass for thousands of OFWs affected by the global economic slump by starting their deployment to Lebanon sooner rather unless there is an agreement on labor standards," Jaalil said in a statement.

"The prevailing political stability in Lebanon has triggered an economic boom that needs thousands of OFWs to fill up vacancies in hotels, restaurants and construction companies," Jaalil said.

Lebanon, he said, which is experiencing a construction boom amid relative peace is in need of waiters, hotel-maids, dishwashers, receptionists, salesladies, and skilled construction workers like carpenters, electricians, basic technicians, scaffolding workers, welders, plumbers and fabricators.

Lebanese employers, he noted, preferred Filipino workers because of their fluency in English and the quality service they give.

But Labor Secretary Marianito Roque said the Philippine government warned Lebanese employers to follow certain wage standards and working conditions before it would lift the ban. For instance, the Philippines wants household workers paid a minimum of $400 a month, Roque said.

Thousands of Filipino workers, many of them undocumented, fled Lebanon in July 2006 after Israel and Hezbollah, based in southern Lebanon, traded heavy artillery shots.

Some 20,000 Filipinos remain legally in the country however.

Duty Free customer not off the hook

THE EMPLOYER union of Duty Free Philippines (DFP) in Mactan (Cebu) Wednesday threw its support behind a cashier who was humiliated by a customer who berated him for asking for identification in a credit card transaction.

"Even if his wrist just a coconut employee, we still support him all the way if he files a complaint," DFP employees union president Deanna Mallari told the business, referring to employee Marvin Fernandez.

On March 13, Fernandez and store manager Susan Gonzales were invited by Royel Fajardo, a fashion designer, at DFP Havana Mall.

Fajardo, the store apologized to Fernandez, but a DFP lawyer told a cashier member Wednesday their legal division was preparing to sue Fajardo countersuit.

Mallari also filed a complaint in the Commission on Human Rights. Jerome Aning

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OPINION

Lorelei-ing

THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES EXPENDED her campaign for public opinion by departing the most ill-informed, the least knowledgeable campaign platform available to spend on her behalf. We mean, of course, Lorelei Fajardo, now of two deputy presidential spokespersons.

Her role is lip service, in a deeply literal sense. Fajardo makes herself available to the media for comments on various issues, ostensibly on behalf of the President. But when stupid comments? Even critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo will acknowledge the strength of her work ethic and the quality of her intellectual equipment. But Fajardo is the complete opposite; she is obviously out of her depth.

But she has a task to do, and she does it. By engaging the media, she allows the Arroyo administration to reinforce its claim that it respects the role of a free press in a democratic polity. By offering jejune commentary and sophomoric statements, however, she and the administration she works for undermine both the work of the press and the object of democracy.

How can the consent of the governed be informed, when the government only wants to pretend to inform the public? Call it Lorelei-ing (or Leer-leing).

The ideal approach is to ignore her, and to wait for more authoritative statements from Anthony Golez, Cerge Remonde, Eduardo Ermita or the President herself. Last Monday, however, she said some things in reaction to the news that Fr. Ed Panlilio, the priest-governor of Pangasinan, was considering a presidential run, that made us sit up and take notice—but for all the wrong reasons.

"It's easy to talk, that's rhetoric, but what about performance? We should look at performance, because we are already talking about the highest leader of the land," Fajardo told reporters.

Her emphasis on performance seems to be set another of those unexamined motherhood statements she was hired to spout. The deputy presidential spokesperson may be incapable of phrasing the thought felicitously, but who can argue with the idea that "performance" is an essential criterion for choosing the next president?

She dismissed the whole notion of "reformist" or value-based politics by asserting that the only—or the main—thing that distinguishes politicians is performance. Her measure: "You are a traditional politician, and your performance is good, [then] I think performance should be the basis [for voters to choose you again]."

So far, so party-line. It is no secret that President Arroyo justifies her long tenure in terms of performance. Forget all the political noise (which in a moment of glasnost candor Mr. Arroyo once admitted he was in large part responsible for); the important thing is that the economy is growing, poverty incidence has fallen, tourism is booming, and so on.

But Fajardo did not leave well enough alone. She also said running a province (a job at Pardaleo) was different from running a country. "If your performance is not good in a lower position, let's say as mayor or governor or any position for that matter, how can you lead the entire nation? That's what we have to be careful about."

Here's things fairly. The implied criticism of Panlilio is part of a long-term Palace strategy to weaken his chances of reelection. Despite what Panlilio has done to stop corruption in Pangasinan, the Arroyo administration has found excuses to get in his way: by refusing police support for the fight against the illegal numbers game jueteng; by organizing resistance to Panlilio among town mayors; by reassigning the governor's influence in the President's home province. Fajardo's dig in Panlilio's record should be seen in this highly partisan context.

But, more important, let's examine the assumption behind Fajardo's blithe positions of other offices. By her own logic, only four politicians are qualified to seek the presidency: the three former presidents, and the incumbent herself, all of whom are disqualified from running again.

Of course, running a province is different from running a country. But no one disputes that a state governor in the United States can be commander in chief, or a mayor of Paris an effective president. Why should Fajardo suggest otherwise?

The only answer is to suppose that she wasn't thinking. But the story possibility exists that, on this point, the spokesperson is in fact reflecting the views of the person she speaks for.

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To PNP: Please focus on kidnappings, not toy guns

IT IS AMAZING HOW THE PHILIPPINE National Police under Director General Jesse Versoza can be so concerned with a toy machine gun invented on a step ladder by two-dozen first graders, former President Joseph Estrada and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, and still remain unconcerned with the upsurge in kidnappings for ransom cases.

Senate Angkas of the Citizens' Action Against Crime and Corruption (CACC) said there were 17 kidnapping last January, 20 in February and 12 so far this March. All the victims were released after the payment of ransoms. More than P54 million has been paid to ransom.

"We are really very bothered that there's a sudden resurgence of kidnapping incidents in the first quarter of this year," said Angkas Sen. Ta the last two years, there was none. It was quiet. Then the kidnappers are [origin]."

I have a theory on the motives in PNP operations are being held now you and politicians need campaign funds. If the PNP is looking for masterminds, it should focus where to look.

* * *

On the toy machine gun, don't the police have anything better to do? Don't they need their men to solve the many crimes that have been mushrooming? Why waste manpower time and effort on a toy gun? If it were not Binay and Estrada riding on Chief Jesse, would the police have bothered?

The police always cite the lack of weapons or as its excuse for their failure to prevent crimes and solve those already committed. But here they are wasting precious manpower on on a toy gun. Is the administration so afraid of Binay and Estrada that it is ready to use manhood for battle?

Letter of Instructions 1264 that the police say has been violated by the display of the replica gun was a martial law edict issued by President Ferdinand Marcos. Senator Estrada and Mayor Binay are not under martial law administration and the LOI no longer exists. He said it was issued during that time because toy guns were being used to rob people. He said that if the police make a big thing out of it, the PNP would be

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

the laughingstock of the entire nation.

"If you convict Jesse and Binay, how about all the children playing with toy guns?" Estrada asked.

* * *

But what that stupid "right of reply" bill will do if it becomes a law. After we published a reply by Teofisto Aquicahan of Pinakes Corp. to a complaint about its brand of fertilizer that the complainant got non "substandard" and "below specifications," another complainant said his corn never looked so good. But it is also published.

It was from the late Teodulo Gervasio of Bael, Pangasinan, and it was sent to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, of the Department of Trade and Industry office in Dagupan City. It said:

"I've noticed that in our last harvest, my yield declined as compared to my previous harvests. I would only conclude that perhaps the fertilizer that I applied were of poor quality.

"I bought from 16-16-16 and 28-28-0 and Atlas 14-14-14 from Atlantic Agricultural & Poultry Supply located in Poblacion Sual, Pangasinan, where I usually buy my fertilizer requirements. Then I sent them to the Bureau of Soils in Dagupan City for analysis.

"It is sad to note, however, that the result of the analysis was unfavorable. I would like to request for your kind attention and that your esteemed agency investigate complaint on these unscrupulous manufacturers or distributors/dealers.

"For your guidance, please find the Analysis Reports of the RSWPR and the Bureau Agricultural Supply analysis now."

The letter was sent way back in November 2005. It is now 2009. It was endorsed on Dec. 6, 2008 by the DTI to the President and Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Director Ma. Victoria Mendoza.

Then the letter went way back to Dagupan City

The strange case of Sergeant Calloway

BATTALION SGT. MAJ. JOHN W. CALLOWAY, 10, dying fought the Spaniards in Cuba, and lost the Filipinos for two years. His character was always rated "excellent," his "services eminently satisfactory." But then he was reduced to private and discharged "without honor." Why was this fine African-American soldier expelled from the Army by his best friend, Daddy?

Calloway had become friendly with Filipino civilians. He did an informal survey, interviewing them about their feelings toward the war and the insurgent troops. In the process, he learned about the cruel practices of the time. He wrote to the Manomed Pinays that the black soldiers were "between the devil and the deep sea" in regard to the war.

But he went further, befriending the Catanduj family of San Fernando, Pampanga. In February 1900 he wrote to Senior Catanduj that he was "pained by the bombing of their wooing, especially as Americans are in the present affair with you. What a wrong to crush everybody and opportunity of a youth of a race!... Would to God it lay in my power to rectify the committed error, and compassionate the Filipinos for having done." He made other statements to the effect that with the growth of education in the country the Filipinos would gain their independence. Some indicated a treacherous intention to arrest the insurgents.

Antonio Catanduj was under surveillance by Lopez Mercado, the local insurgent leader. Senior Tomas were "well known sympathizers with the insurrection." In October 1900, their home was raided. The letter was discovered.

Calloway was given a general court martial. Although he was charged with "treason," the specification, that "being a married man" he had "lived in open adultery with a native woman." The evidence did not support the charge. An acquittal followed.

The American went to have tried in double his career by using a trumped up charge. It is likely that he believed there was no legal case to support him. But would they dare to reveal the extent of their surveillance. Another motive would have been to avoid testimony that he had been disturbed by Tomas' descriptions of US horror' lies, tales to the population of his friends.

The Americans were determined to get Calloway out of the country as they considered him an "extremely dangerous" character, and were concerned at the degree of friendship between black soldiers and the "natives."

From confinement in Bilibid prison, Calloway denied any treasonous intent, pointing to his heroic, officially commended volunteer mission some months previously in which he crawled through insurgent lines at night to deliver an important order to attack them. He tried to explain that his private sympathy for the Filipinos in no way detracted from his commitment to do his public duty for his country. He sought another court martial to prove his innocence. No guilty decision was ever made.

Instead, the next step against Calloway was an administrative procedure. Asked for a recommendation, his regimental commander ignored the request, commenting: "The education of this man has been such that he will consider it persecution, and he has shown himself to be without principle by alone doing the legal American rule for a Filipino woman... he is likely to join the Filipino rebels should a favorable opportunity offer." He recommended that Calloway be discharged "without honor."

The matter went up the chain of command, with concurring recommendations at each level. Maj. Gen. Lloyd Wheaton speculated, "In my opinion he will desert to the insurgents [sic] before long this [opportunity if he has the opportunity]."

In a review of the case, the Inspector General concluded: "Calloway is a bright man, with an adroit mind, a very good command of language, and somewhat skill in creating opposition and misconstruing words... in view of Calloway's education, command of language, and knowledge of the meaning of words, as shown in his correspondence, and the education of the men to whom he wrote, this letter can only be taken as meaning exactly what it says." His conclusion: "I regard Calloway as a dangerous man, in view of his influence with the natives, as shown by that letter, and the circumstances of his court-martial."

Calloway somehow managed to get legal assistance from Abel C. Smith, an American with a private practice in Manila. The Supreme Court denied an application for habeas corpus, holding it had no jurisdiction. From Manila, Gen. Arthur MacArthur, Officer Commanding, said in his official recommendation: "It is very apparent that he is disloyal and should be remote in these islands. He would undoubtedly assume that acts of open treason not perhaps join the insurrection one and out. One man of the 24th Infantry by the name of David Fagan has already done so and as a leader among the insurrectos is giving great trouble by directing guerrilla bands."

Calloway was shipped back to prison in San Francisco. He again sought a court martial. Nevertheless, in February 1901, he was officially forbidden to think to private and discharged without honor. Eight months later he attempted to re-enlist in the Philippine Scouts.

Determined to prove himself, he returned to the Philippines to work in the Bureau of Public Printing. He resided illegally for two years. In April 1904 he again sought to re-enlist. The reply was negative. Finally, he returned to the United States, where he was employed by the Census Bureau.

Still ill, Calloway is a retired senior lecturer in law at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

Re-tooling our 'outrage meter'

THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO BE OUTraged about these days, there seems to be a need to update or re-tool our "outrage meter."

What just a few months or years ago would have sent thousands of Filipinos out on the streets in protest, these days clients have to be angry remotely, press statements from the usual suspects, but from the majority, a shrug and an expression of "So what else is new?"

So President Macapagal-Arroyo is the real power behind the insurgent Cha-cha moves which supposedly will make the 2010 elections moot before Congress convenes into a Constituent Assembly? Is this really a surprise? Isn't this what people have been saying all along, ever since our legislators first floated the possibility of amending the Constitution before the 2010 elections?

Presidential public opinion surveys had reflected strong opposition to the move, but that position seems to be softening. A recent Pulse Asia survey, as quoted in this paper yesterday, says four out of 10 Filipinos are not in favor of changing the Constitution, while 3 in 10 are in favor. Though not significant, that 4- to 3- percent who said they were "undecided," though it's possible their position will harden into a "yes" or "no" depending on which side of the Cha-cha debate prevails. Perhaps that's what the administration hopes will happen. But enough about self-preservation. Are they "allies" of changing the Constitution because more palatable, more acceptable, passing instruments in an "amenable" political development.

And while in the past outraged Filipinos marched on the streets to protest the president from tinkering with the Charter to suit a personal agenda, these days, travelers range from resigned dread to mapping "post-Cha-cha" scenarios.

It is possible that the inevitable resurrection of what was once thought of as the dead horse that is Cha-cha is a strategy to bankrupt the opposition. Indeed, the numbers that have shored up at the many anti-Cha-cha rallies have been diminishing, while the opposition has been hard put raising funds to mount those rallies which have prevailed on to nothing more substantial than a few phone taps. It could also be a strategy to drain Cebu, close to make the rounds on a vintage World War II jeep outfitted with a wooden machine gun. At this, police and even Malacañang spokespersons expressed alarm at the former president's choice of vehicle as convoy, saying the opposition leader may have "violated" the "spirit of the law" by parading around with a heavy weapon.

"The common sense" was Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile's helpful advice to police, while Senate Minority Leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said it was all "a big joke."

Still, the caravan display through the streets of Cebu may have been in bad taste, for that is all it was, and by threatening to file charges for violation of a law prescribing the display of gun replicas, the police and Malacañang may have only boosted the stock of Erap among gun enthusiast aides. At a time of general chaos when it comes to Erap, GMA has no sense of humor whatsoever.

* * *

"HOPE is so last January," a New York Times columnist wrote last week, commenting that the country has indeed entered the year of despair. While the country roared on the wings of hope following President Obama's inauguration, for one the mood has turned sour, especially after the "changes" that Obama promised seems to have stumbled after reports of the AIG bonuses.

Indeed, hope is a fragile emotion, almost always hurt, too. The purported presidential candidacy of Pampanga Gov. "Among Ed" Panlilio, being pushed by a coalition ranging from anti-drones to OFWs, activists to disgruntled civil servants, has given rise to a number of political eyebrows. Critics carp about the lack of funding, the lack of national exposure of the proposed candidates, the chutzpah of a priest who dares take on the political establishment.

Indeed, conventional wisdom says Governor Panlilio has the most "ghost" of a chance to make it to Malacañang if God relents he runs in 2010. Then again, isn't that what people said about Among Ed's chances when he ran in Pampanga? And isn't that what] pundits also said about a neophyte senator's run for the White House?

Rizal's reading list

NOT TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE Philippines, the library with a significant number of manuscripts by or to Jose Rizal is the Lopez Memorial Museum. Aside from the magnificent Filipiniana collection that grew out of a core of rare books assembled by Eugenio Lopez Sr. from duplicates in Europe and the United States, the Lopez Museum has set aside for a wealth of Rizal material that is not only has Spanish-era Filipiniana but a collection of photographs collected when the late Carlos Quirino, former National Library director, and later National Artist for Historical Literature) was researching his biographies of Rizal and the Quezons de Manila Observatory campus is the new Rizal Library that services the students' reference needs aside from housing significant collections like the Ateneo Library of Manuel's Writings (ALIMWP) which is an archive of manuscripts, correspondence, and other documents by, about, and achievers; the American Historical Collection (that was once located in the 23 Holidays in Roman Boulevard); the Pardo de Tavera Room

AT LARGE
Rina Jimenez-David

much more than funds from the opposition, including that rare currency: savvy.

* * *

A LETTER from Aida Ito of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines expresses puzzlement at the "lack of outrage" shown in a recent editorial on the killing of Rebelyn Pitao. Rebelyn, the daughter of an NPA commander in Davao, had been missing for days and her body was eventually found floating in a river bearing signs of torture. Suspicion fell of course fell on the military but as the Inquirer editorial pointed out, calls made responsibility rests with the doorstep of President Gloria Arroyo.

What "disconnect?" Pe was apparently the appointment of the editorial writer who concluded the piece by saying that "Rebelyn was just another victim." I myself think this statement was meant to be ironic, given the spate of "just another victim" killings in the past few years. "Just another victim" is another way of saying too many have fallen—and that outrage at "just another killing" has become numbed by the sheer number of killings.

Should the editorial writers have frothed at the mouth and foamed out the shibboleths of passionate oratory? Perhaps the calm, even tone was a statement in itself that the killing of Rebelyn is no longer an extraordinary, shocking event, but routine, commonplace, frighteningly routine. And that says so much more about the state of our Republic, than reams of outraged statements could have.

* * *

BUT is this something worth working up a letter for? Former President Joseph Estrada, on a visit to

LOOKING BACK
Ambeth R. Ocampo

that houses a rotund bag of historical material that I really should take time to visit soon.

So much to do so little time. The problem with research is that it takes a lot of time not just to locate an item but to read it and digest its contents so that it can be presented in a classroom or lecture hall. It takes time to weave little pieces of data into three pages for this column. When I go abroad for research, I spend eight hours in a library or an archive because there are no distractions, no phone calls, no other responsibilities to do. If only I could find locused time in the libraries above this summer. Research time is the first item that's resolution I break each year.

The one thing that continues to fascinate me in the Lopez libraries is a handful of bibliographies that list books that made for books that I've read. We all know he grew up in a house in Calamba with books that then, as now, were quite rare in the Philippines. Rizal still a finding draft-stated readers in a house with books. Rizal was the seventh of 11 children, and we don't know how many books were in the house but we know that his parents bought books for him and his siblings. Rizal, according to his grandchildren, tried to make up for lost time after 1896 by reading the multi-volume Encyclopedia Britannica, to come to over during his retirement.

Rizal's bibliographic cards reveal a very systematic reader who kept records of what he read in his list. I don't list down my books. I once lend a librarian to catalogue my books, only to realize that she needed to re-shelve the volumes in a system known only to herself. I've given up on lending books and now only borrow books from friends who have died. I'm sure that's a weird superstition but I'm afraid that if I return books to the living, I'll never see them again.

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Rizal's list can only be taken as meaning exactly what it says." His conclusion: "I regard Calloway as a dangerous man, in view of his influence with the natives, as shown by that letter, and the circumstances of his court-martial."

Calloway somehow managed to get legal assistance from Abel C. Smith, an American with a private practice in Manila. The Supreme Court denied an application for habeas corpus, holding it had no jurisdiction. From Manila, Gen. Arthur MacArthur, Officer Commanding, said in his official recommendation: "It is very apparent that he is disloyal and should be remote in these islands. He would undoubtedly assume that acts of open treason not perhaps join the insurrection one and out. One man of the 24th Infantry by the name of David Fagan has already done so and as a leader among the insurrectos is giving great trouble by directing guerrilla bands."

Calloway was shipped back to prison in San Francisco. He again sought a court martial. Nevertheless, in February 1901, he was officially forbidden to think to private and discharged without honor. Eight months later he attempted to re-enlist in the Philippine Scouts.

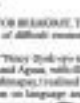
Determined to prove himself, he returned to the Philippines to work in the Bureau of Public Printing. He resided illegally for two years. In April 1904 he again sought to re-enlist. The reply was negative. Finally, he returned to the United States, where he was employed by the Census Bureau.

Still ill, Calloway is a retired senior lecturer in law at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

Tagalog slang

THIS MORNING, I USED "TUBIGAN" FOR BEARGOOSE. THE main meaning very thin liquid, a sign of difficult economic times.

"Tibinjaw" is one of the entries in "Pinoy Dyok-syo nar yo: The Completion Edition" by Ferdinand Aguas, with illustrations by Ace Cole. While eating the tibinjaw, I realized it's been a long time since I did a column on language and I thought I should be.



PINOY KASI
Michael L. Tan

Appropriation

In reading Tagalog Slang Dictionary reminded me of the tendency in the 1970s, to create new words by inventing syllables. Thus, "pos" came from playing around with the first and last syllables of "negatibo," "ting" was actually derived from an inverted "pare." It was quite a fad for young PR types to sprinkle conversations with these words. I'm old. Men and I remember friends who could scarcely even read in a sentence now their invented slang equivalents. The invention seemed almost natural for the 1970s, a period of youthful rebellion, a linguistic country cultivar that literally turned language on their head.

The 1990 edition of "Pinoy Dyoksyonaryo" reflect a true dating from of language transformation: appropriation. There are many languages in the world that use appropriation, which means combining two or more "morphemes" or language units that have meanings. German is an example, with Ellen Johnston's sophisticated words in short example is "kindergartenschule" meaning "kindergarten" and "garten" or garden-tool. Filipino languages are full of appropriated words. (The pioneers nominal tatay bring to my mind "babaglan," a rainbow described as a king's (i.e. ruling).

Appropriation seems to have picked up itself, producing many amazing and amusing new words. Thus: "pos" from the 1970s has since given rise to "posigs" to refer to a "sign" (i.e. positive or negative) and "posibels" for "possibilities." "posigs" for a cigarette that one sticks in the ear ("pin"); and "posels," which is a safety device made by tying the cigarette to a stick and using this to light a firecracker!

Since there are so many terms in "Dyoksonaryo," I thought I'd focus on terms related to the body. There were quite a few, which is also an almost obsessive interest in synonyms and physiology.

For example, "pabak" refers to the short butt ("babak") around a wheel ("pwet"). But cause there's more than eighteen terms involved so we can now words. Filipinos love guessing or playing on the sounds in words as it shouldn't be surprising that "kiss" has so many terms. Besides "halik" we have coups up with "sayad" to refer to a new mode. Talking about nudes, a "sunadang" is a nude ("sunad") on the nose ("dang"), while a "batadhook" refers to the butt or a nude, derived from "batad" (butt and the English "nude." Yet here agglutination can produce massive terms, a combination of English and Tagalog!

Twelve years ago, I wrote a column in support of agglutination with body bits: "Eggnot" for example means a new ("bago") internalist ("bigote"). Some years ago I was surprised to learn from my students that there was a term "bumik," which refers to small butt. No one seems to be able to explain how the term came about, unlike "kurus," which refers to the lips "kurbata" (curved) and the pubic area. My informants explain that it means "kumpisang ng bulbol."

Skins and sounds

Modern technologies give us new terms like "thumbnote," the thumb used to text messages, and "quento," the peoples noun ("panto") you get inside a pan.

A number of Tagalog terms refer to our vulnerabilities to, and fear of skin infections and afflictions. Who would have thought we would come up with "pidiepsil" to refer to a pimple on a dimple? "Tigas" is a big feat, smaller compared to a "bonkingbang," a large (as in King Kong) "bonkong," and if someone has the skin some called "pink," he should make sure it doesn't become in this point referred then become "pinkgil" or "pink" (but resembles Silvestre ("bukbit").

Filipino scientists bodies. "Bikkini" refers to bikini marks. Careful, too, Filipinos have neutered, and coined a term, "dumidorant," to refer to deodorant residues left on the armpit.

We are also very conscious about "tinga" or food residues on the teeth. "Nginga" is a smile that exposes all your "tinga" and "dangkngis" is so laugh ("ngingis") showing a dirty ("dungis") mouth. No wonder we have the slang for the "brigade" (a look or "binibo" used to remove the "linga"), "brigadero" (a person who is always cleaning his teeth) and a "singsing" (as someone "singsi" recently or "pulupit").

We also have terms for the sounds of the body movements, including "bumilaso" to play ("laso") with candy in your mouth. "Kalsurap" refers to the movements ("yuppng") while on a horse ("kabayo"), which I can imagine might take on more sensual meanings in the future.

We have generated all kinds of terms for physiological situations and bodily functions. Thus, "bilukbuk" means the "bilukpot" which is to stress like schizophrenic. "Ulimik" refers to the way we roll our eyes upwards ("ulok") when we are sickled ("kilig"). "Kilig," a kind of exhilarated feeling, has always been an intriguing word and it has now spawned a new term, "kilimag," to refer to the "kilig" feeling they get after they make "tinging." If this is a family newspaper so foreigners will have to ask their Filipino friends what "tinging" and "kilimag" mean.

The slang terms will no we're quite comfortable with our bodies, what with our lavish and healthy peoples descriptions. Consider "yutzeet," referring to a gentle (cute) passing of wind ("utot"), but because, the term is meant to be an understatement because the "mutzeet" is said to be deadly.

Before I forget, I should add that I noticed that "Pinoy Dyoksonaryo" is quite apart from all dictionary terms, perhaps because we already have so many that give it to the Filipinos to supplement one of the more incredible terms to produce, hold on to your seats, "pinghat."

Have some new Tagalog slang terms to share? Write Ferdinand Aguas at pinoydyoksonaryo@gmail.com. And can others begin to coin slang terms in Cebuano, Ilokano and other Philippine languages?

* * *

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Master rapper's legacy

LETTERS

FRANCIS M REMAINS IN THE HEARTS of many Filipinos because long before anyone in his generation did, he irrigated his ear and music with Filipinism. He was proud to be a Filipino and was inspired in the Philippines at a time when many of us were going abroad and wanted to become Americans. He sings spoke of love for country and Filipino culture and tradition at a time when Filipinos wanted to wear foreign brand of items, no matter if there's false. He opposite star-and-show-case-new Jec-

Vet's spouse waiting for arrears payment

THIS IS ABOUT MY CLAIM FOR 199- paid pensions. I'm a surviving spouse. I've filed my claim with the Philippine veterans affairs Office (PVAO) in Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

I first filed my claim on April 28, 1997. It's in the middle of 2006, I hadn't received any reply from PVAO.

In September 2006 I started calling PVAO by long distance. I talked with Roy Simeon of PVAO. Claims Division, the because of some assignment he could not attend every claims. So it was Mel Sison of Claims Section who worked on my claims.

Recah invited to Cotabato to find truth

WE HOPE PRESIDENT GLORIA Recah Trinidad will not allow himself and the investigation because to be used. (Cotabato's award-winning Bishop of Jesus found.)" inquirer, 2/14/09) to be really interested in providing his readers with the real facts behind the issues at hand?

If he won't mind spending his time in actually visit Cotabato province, I am

into the good Gov Issing Sacbatan, a peaceful and upright man, will welcome him with open arms to reveal the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

—MARIO CARMONDO, SCO representative to the Provincial Development Council (PDC) and Provincial Health Board (PHB), Province of Cotabato, Poblacion 8, Midsayap, Cotabato

Let private sector 'sponsor' public projects

"IF YOU WANT, THERE'S A WAY. If you don't, there's an excuse," goes one of the slogans of the late great Gov. Jose Rizal there. We all were entertained anecdotes, which is actually something we should have had decades ago.

Here's another idea: Why not a congressional act that will deputize the private sector to help make over public projects, instead of making them pay taxes? The government has a list of projects, and private entities, instead of paying taxes, may choose to spon- sor any of them. For example, Ayalas can pay the salaries of teachers, and estate developers can rewrite mini- mums to make them marketable. proof, a group of multinationals can pool funds for port improvements—but we mistrust congress doing the entire maneuvering like in Baga City. The

feasibility of this idea has been proven by the success and public ac- ceptance of the things A. Edward pro- jects. The bureau of Internal Revenue can still collect taxes from individuals and small- and medium-sized enter- prises. [Hello!]...but by this time, there will be no more need for the DPWH if private entities with a more ac- tive role in governance will enable us to realize our dream of becoming a First World country more speedily.

This will rationalize the businesses- ing minimum opportunities for profit. private future tax holiday and foster a greater sense of national responsibili- ty and pride...this is people-empower- ment at its truest and most glorious manifestation.

—JONATHAN ARONG, jonathanADrivers.blogspot.com

Biazon's silence

SEN RAUL ROCO, RELIABLE COMRON publicly urged against this. Gen. Jose- phine Cruz Reyes, the military's lea- ding of the ICRC (International Com- mittee of the Red Cross) kidnapping crisis and unanimously projected to the public as image of a government deeply divided. That, the suggested, of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile for Senator Gordon to lie low for a while and help try to quiet the things in prop- er perspective to ease tensions.

Enrile also said that "hopes" from government officials, in particular, should be given confidence as to not to portray government as divided. That statements of Enrile echoes the sent- iments of the public that has been fol- lowing the crisis. In occasions like this, silence does say a point, leaving our government officials quarrel in public is the last thing we need.

While Enrile's admonition took some heat off the word was however Enrile also withdrew, the silence of his. Double Standard. Senator's master Ma- rino, a quite surprising. If Lapiedy's re- pair is more needed, it is Biazon's. We would like to hear from him because Marine troops are operating in Iloilo, and with the experience as a Marine of how he could provide a glimpse of what would be done. Besides, there have been insinuations that all that the Marines were in Iloilo to stay, which I think is to added to them. Those insinua- tions can cause widespread demoral- ization in the ranks of the Marines, which could be detrimental to their op- erations. It is, therefore, important for Senator Biazon to express his support for his fellow Marines.

—TONY ROBERT TABUSO (Ret.), Philippine Navy, Marines, mail_tabuso@yahoo.com

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Across the NATION

Release of captive cops soon seen

By Beverly Mendoza in Manila
and Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE THREE RIZAL POLICEMEN BEING KEPT CAPTIVE BY COMMUNIST guerrillas since Jan. 3 are to be freed in two to three days, the Rizal provincial government said yesterday.

The release will come after successful negotiations, according to the statement issued by Pilipit Gov. Reinato C. Tanseco III.

The three policemen—Insp. Ret Galapon, PO1 Marvin Aguon and PO1 Alberto Umali—were seized by New People's Army guerrilla after an ambush on a police convoy that killed a policeman and wounded another.

An informant said negotiators are "just fine-tuning" the release as to what time and where the five policemen would be set free.

"Barring any complications, then three policemen will be back to their loved ones soon," said the informant who is privy to the negotiations but has no authority to speak on the matter.

Ceasefire

Major Gen. Reinad Dendub, commander of the army's 2nd Infantry Division in Camp Filart, said the Armed Forces have already declared a one-week "suspension of combat and rescue operation" from March 20-27 to facilitate the release of the captive troopers.

"It's not a 50/50 (cooperation of military operation) that the NPA has been asking," Dendub said.

"We will just temporarily stop our combat operation that is related only to the release of the policemen. We will continue to deal with their other terrorist activities."

He said the ceasefire covers 20 municipalities in the 2nd district of Filart, 1st district of Quezon and 4th district of Laguna.

He said the military relayed the order to suspend military operations to Tanseco III.

"The suspension of military operations is a manifestation of the government sincerity and (encouragement of Governor Tanseco) peace building efforts," said Dendub.

Tanseco said while there was no specific date for the release, he hoped it would come on March 30, in time for the policemen's graduation.

He asked the AFP and PNP to extend the suspension of operations to March 30.

One more week

On Thursday, Quezon Bishop Emilio Marquez, head of the Diocese of Lucena, said he was able to talk to Fidel Agcaoili, spokesperson of the communist National Democratic Front based in Utrecht, The Netherlands, on Wednesday to help secure the immediate release of the three policemen.

"He (Agcaoili) asked me to relay to the military there demand to extend the present one-week suspension of military operations for another week to be able to ensure the safety of the NPA rebels that will get involved in the release," Marquez said.

He said he immediately contacted Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Aguinaldo, and relayed the NDF's demand.

"I was told by General Bangit that it will be subject to technical study," Marquez said.

Due to his overseas boat with sickness, Marquez was not able to actively participate in the negotiations for the freedom of the policemen.

"But in my own little way I'm covering all possible efforts to help the families of the policemen. God will help them," he said.

He said he also contacted Antipolo Bishop Gabby Reyes to also exert efforts to help speed up the release process.

"Bishop Reyes vowed to help. NDF leader Luis Jalandoni was sent his classmate in the seminary," according to Marquez.

When contacted, Bangit maintained that if the communist guerrillas holding the three policemen were really sincere, "they should have released the three in time for the graduation of their children or respected their families."

"We've already done our part and suspended our operation upon the request of Governor Tanseco and the policemen's families. They (NPA) can now release the three anytime, anywhere until tomorrow (March 27) and my men will secure them from," he said.

'God will help them...'

West Visayas execs appeal for release of typhoon funding

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—SEVEN TRADE OFFicials have called on the national government to find and release funds for repair and rehabilitation projects in areas ravaged by last year's typhoon "Frank," warning of another disaster when the rainy season sets in.

Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas Raul Banias said the release of the P6 billion "Typhoon (Hope) Fund" remained secure more than eight months after the typhoon triggered the region's worst flooding.

Banias, executive director of Task Force Bangon Panay, said the delay in the release of funds for use in hold much needed repairs and replacement of steel infrastructure projects and the dredging of heavily silted creeks, rivers and other waterways.

The heavily silted rivers could overflow and trigger flash floods smaller to last year's, he said.

Worries

"We are worried that a big disaster would happen when the rain comes," Banias said in a speech at a regional summit on vulnerable development.

He said the release of the funds have been put on hold because the source of the funds has been pegged to the passing of the unsigned Net Income Tax Scheme (NETS) bill pending in Congress, which would raise P9 billion.

Banias said the NETS, if approved, would be implemented in 2010 at the earliest because there was not enough time to pass the bill before this April 15 deadline in the filing of income taxes.

"If the rehabilitation fund will be sourced from revenues raised through NETS, then it would be too late," Banias said in an interview.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas insisted that lives could be lost and properties could be damaged if the floods occur since the creeks and rivers in the city have not been rehabilitated and were newly silted.

"ITUMBA SI PING."

Ito ngayon ang sigaw ng mga sakim at makapangyarihang magnanakaw. Gagawin nila ang lahat para SIRAAN, TAKUTIN, O PATAHIMIKIN si Senador Ping Lacson sa kanyang laban kontra korapsyon.

Kung anu-ano ang paratang sa kanya para matakpan ang sarili nilang katiwalian.

KUNG MAY KASALANAN SI PING NA AYAW NIYANG MABULGAR, DAPAT SANA TAKOT SIYANG MAGSIWALAT NG KORAPSYON NG MAKAPANGYARIHAN. BAKIT PATULOY ANG KANYANG PAG-EXPOSE SA MGA CORRUPT?

Suriin natin. Sino nga lang ba sa simula't sapul ang hindi natitinag sa paghadlang sa pagnanakaw sa kaban ng bayan?

Matapang man si Ping, hindi niya kayang labanan nang mag-isa ang mga corrupt. Tulungan natin siya.

Kapit-bisig tayo para ipaglaban ang tama at ituwid ang mali. Bawat katiwalian na mapigil ay isang malaking tulong sa bayan.

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Chiz-Jinggoy team seen in 2010 polls

ESCUDERO

ESTRADA

SORSOGON CITY—A team-up of opposition senators Francis Escudero and Jinggoy Estrada for the presidential and vice presidential race in the 2010 elections is to cobalt, said a political analyst here.

The analyst relied on Estrada's musings on Tuesday night during the commencement exercises of the Sorsogon State College at its main campus here where the lawmaker was the guest speaker.

In his musings, Estrada said he was following the footsteps of his father, former president Joseph Ejercito Estrada—as he was also an actor, a mayor and even senator—as a possible candidate for vice president these coming elections before going to bid for the presidency.

He said he is weighing the possibility of a team-up with Escudero as his president for the 2010 elections as, he said, both of them are stalwarts of the opposition party and good friends.

His statement of a possible tandem with Escudero drew an applause from the audience.

Escudero is a native of Sorsogon and has been acknowledged as having a wide following, especially among the youth.

Joey Gola, a local political analyst here, said if the tandem of the opposition senators, who also both have good records as legislators, would possibly defeat other considerables even from the administration.

"The idea of a team-up is most welcomed by the Sorsogonons as they are both with good credentials plus they have the popularity needed to unite the electorates," said Gola.

"Their chemistry, especially at this time that most Filipinos are dismayed with the administration of President Arroyo, would, I think, nail the administration candidates," Gola said.

He also said that not only Sorsogonons should rally behind Escudero, but all Bicolanos as well, as the senator might not only become the first Bicolano president but the one who would also serve the people well.

The 50-year-old Escudero has reportedly not decided yet on the matter, saying it was too early and he has more work to do at the Senate.

He, however, said he was open to any possibility. *Ray Gerardia, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

ELEMENTARY students cheer in front of their school in Barangay Palaton, Kidapawan City as a peace caravan passes by on March 16. The caravan came by to support of calls from various groups for peace in region in Mindanao, a dream that has remained elusive for decades.

Mindanao evacuees recount 40 years of fleeing fighting

> The cycle of evacuation-resettlement-evacuation ... is a result of the continuing war in the conflict-torn areas of Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—Mohamad Datumbalong, principal of Pumanungo Elementary School in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, describes himself as a "permanent evacuee."

His family, along with other villagers, fled Datumbalong on Aug. 25 last year when government troops started shelling Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) positions.

The fighting between Moro rebels and the Armed Forces spurred fear-ridden residents of Central Mindanao following an attack by rebels on Kauswagan and Kolambugan towns in Lanao del Norte days earlier.

Seven years after, Datumbalong and his family are among the more than 20,000 evacuees still residing for the opportunity to return home, scores of them temporarily housed at the town's gymnasium.

Datumbalong said he had started building a house in the publication because he feels their supposedly temporary life as evacuees would become permanent.

5 generations

Pastor Reo Montecillo, chair of the non-government group Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC), recalled that five generations of his family in Kauswagan town in Lanao del Norte have also been evacuees more or less every time war erupts.

He said the cycle of evacuation-resettlement-evacuation experienced by Central Mindanao communities is a result of the continuing war in the conflict-torn areas of Mindanao.

"We have been in this situation for the last 40 years. It is about time that we all take the boldest steps to end it," Montecillo told some 200 delegates to the one-day International Solidarity Conference on Mindanao that ended on the Davao Convention and Trade Center.

On Wednesday, Montecillo and Datumbalong joined conference delegates in a caravan from here to Datu Piang, Maguindanao to begin celebrating March 18 as Mindanao Peace Power Day.

The caravan started at the Freedom Park with morning prayer by Sultan Bayao Imad, ing a peace rite around the city, Kadayangan-ito prince Amado Picardal, known as the "biking priest," joined other cyclists in accompanying them.

Rabih Rudin, president of the United Youth for Peace and Development (Unypad), said celebrating March 18 as Mindanao Peace Power Day with significance to its commemoration among the Moro people who observe it as Bangsamoro Freedom Day.

Jabidah Day

March 18 is the day the Jabidah Massacre was carried out in 1968 in Corregidor island. When its details became public, it was thought to be the major "turning point of the remembering of the Moro people."

The senator also considers that date as the reckoning point for the start of most aggressive Moro liberation campaign. Government's response to these has essentially shaped the socio-political landscape of Mindanao.

Also, Rudin, the lone survivor of the massacre, also joined the caravan. Artists had been going around Mindanao since March 1 to narrate his story of how he survived the massacre where 37 of his fellow soldier-trainees were murdered by their trainers. They were supposed to be trained as commandos to attack Sabah, Malaysia to occupy the island.

From here, the caravan passed Kidapawan, Koronon, Pikit, and Midsayap, all in North Cotabato; Bisaang and Bulusan, all in Sultan Kudarat; Cotabato City; Datu Piang and Sinsuatan, all in Maguindanao.

Caravan call

At every stop, it echoed the major call of conference delegates, which included local and international peace activists, for both government troops and MILF forces to "immediately cease hostilities."

Fighting prevented the evacuees' return to their villages.

As of Jan. 27, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) counted at least 33,4,045 internally displaced persons in Central Mindanao who are still in evacuation centers.

Clashes continued to disrupt the villagers' lives, civil society monitors reported. *Kyam B. Binamira, Inquirer Mindanao*

Ombudsman Visayas seeks probe of prosecutor

By Jhanice Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE PROBE into the alleged overpriced lamp posts in the city will not be conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman-Visayas (OMB-Visayas) but by the Office of the Ombudsman in Manila.

Ombudsman Visayas Deputy Special Prosecutor Jesus Cabaluna said the OMB-Visayas has no jurisdiction over the case because the respondents are officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Region 7.

Cabaluna said the OMB-Visayas will only conduct a fact-finding investigation on the case and will submit its findings to the OMB in Manila

GMA: Lifeline, training, incentives for jobless

From page A1

Exports in January fell 40.6 percent, while imports plunged 34.5 percent, as the global economic slump worsened. Exports and imports have been declining since October last year.

The International Monetary Fund expects the global economy to shrink this year, the first since the Second World War.

Skills training

Ms Arroyo said the government would come in the training phase courtesy of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda).

She said Tesda would offer scholarships to beneficiaries would be "more skilled when the market comes back."

Ms Arroyo said she was looking to keep the government-private sector partnership for at least six months, the average duration of the emergency employment her administration was offering.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said electronics firms would also continue giving their displaced workers "all sorts of benefits" on top of the separation pay the employers had received.

Residency status

Favila said the strategy of giving out cumbersome benefits was intended to keep the workers' "residency" status, a key element to the computation of their retirement pay.

"The arrangement is that once there's an upswing [in the industry]," he told reporters, "they will rehire [the displaced workers]."

Of the 45,000 workers who lost their jobs as of February, 21,000 were from companies based in Laguna, according to Favila.

The number of workers laid off since October rose to 56,000 workers as of March 10, Bello said, citing data from the Department of Labor and Employment. Some 4,500 overseas Filipinos were also put out their jobs during the period.

Forced leave

Bello said there were also some 60,000 who had been sent on forced leave by companies.

"That should be the focus because if we solve Laguna, we would have solved a great deal already," Ms Arroyo said. "[The situation] will rebound, but when? We don't want to wait for the rebound. We have to speed it up," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the job loans had [approved] off based on the assessment of Labor Secretary Marianito Roque.

Names, addresses

The President noted that the government had the names and addresses of the displaced workers, allowing it to easily track them down and give them jobs here or abroad.

"It's a very finite number unlike those reported in other countries," she said. "So we can really take care of each one of them. That's my instruction."

Funds from SSS

Bello said the insurance fund would be available to members of the Social Security System (SSS), who have been working and contributing to the agency for two years and recently lost his or her job.

WAITING FOR A SALE An unlikely goods scenario does nothing but warn the customers. A steep economic downturn could push the country's '09 budget deficit more than 40 percent above the targeted limit, says Ninda. AFP

"This is not a loan and it will not affect the retirement benefits that the individual will get later on," he said. "The [employer may modify the number to find a new job."

Bello said the Cabahurans area, the country's export powerhouse, should be given special attention because most of the laid off workers were from companies in the region.

Amend social security law

SSS president Romulo Neri said the social security law backed provisions for unemployment benefits.

Recto's proposal to provide unemployment insurance to workers would require amending the Social Security Act of 1997, Neri said.

"The contributions [66] collected at present only cover maternity, sickness, disability, retirements, death and funeral benefits of members and their beneficiaries, as provided by law," he said in a statement.

Neri said the government must quickly how unemployment benefits of SSS members would be funded.

"This may be from government subsidies, like what developed countries do to support their unemployed workers, or by increasing contribution payments of members to cover the additional benefit," he said.

Jobs from tourism

Government is also looking at tourism to generate jobs in the country.

The President indicated that the government was banking not only on tourists but also on the BPO (business process outsourcing) as half on the workers displaced by the global downturn.

"I don't know how much tourism will grow but definitely the arrivals in the tourist destinations are up and BPO, the signs of growth are really unmistakable," she said in a briefing in Sarangani province.

Ms Arroyo said reporters that several hotels and resorts would open across the country this year beginning this summer when huge crowds file off to beaches.

She said The Banyan Tree Holdings Ltd., which is spending $260 million to construct three resorts in Cavite, Bulacan, between 2010 and 2012, was among the biggest investors.

Some 2,000 hotel rooms would be opened in Boracay, Subic, Cebu and Metro Manila this year, providing 8,000 jobs, according to Tourism Secretary Ace Durano.

Recovery in second half

As global demand picks up, Philippine exports are expected to rise in the second half of the year, which could limit job losses to half the 200,000 expected earlier, a senior government official said.

Spending by politicians ahead of the 2010 presidential election would also boost the economy this year, and help the government meet its economic growth target of 3.7-4.4 percent, said Cesar Arroyo, director for policy planning at the National Economic and Development Authority. (For related story see Page A6.) With a report from TJ Burgonio and Reuters

THE VIEW FROM HIGH A man is dwarfed by the floor to ceiling glass panels at the lobby of SM's exhibition center in Pasay City. EPA/EDD

Cocks and Balls give way to Wangs in UK name game

From page A1

the number of females were reduced to 693. From 1,131.

People named Smith decreased by 71 percent, Jones by 53 percent, Goodwin by 42 percent, Shuttleworth by 41 percent, and Cockburn by 39 percent, said Richard Webber, visiting professor of geography at King's College, London.

"If you find the [absolute] number goes down, it's often because they changed their names or they emigrated," Webber, author of the study, told Reuters on Wednesday.

Bad taste

Webber said that in many cases, people probably changed their surnames as they came to be regarded as in bad taste. "It's because the meaning of words can change. Take the name Cock—that as a term for stupid is a relatively recent innovation."

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Bull meant "valid" or "useful" in Old English, whereas it means "foolish" today.

"That's why there are names which people think aren't really very pleasant names and you wonder why they persisted so long as they did."

Zhang, Wang, Yang

Webber, whose work can be seen on the website supercasino.com, got his data for 2008 from credit card firm Experian and mapping service Geowise. He then compared it with the census of 1881.

Webber also discovered that the most popular names in Britain have not changed over the past 127 years.

Last year, Smith, Jones, Williams, Brown, Taylor and Davies held the top five spots, in exactly the same order as they did a century ago.

Webber also found that between 1998 and 2008, the names Zhang, Wang and Yang experienced the fastest growth.

Zhang rose by 4,715 percent, while Wang grew by 2,225 percent. Reuters

After holding press con, Obama goes on 'Web con'

From page A1

the same online network and style to speak—unfiltered—with Americans.

He already has taken that tactic on the road, spending two days on the White House bus this week at town hall-style meetings and appearing on Jay Leno's late-night talk show.

The tactic offered easier questions and a chance to get Obama's message to the widest possible audience.

Old school to new media

"It's not a whole lot different than when we in California doing the interview," Gibbs said. "It's just we'll have people hooked up from a lot of different places all over the country, but he'll be able to do all that from the East Room."

Already, the White House is considering the old-school press conference with the new-media event. It will be an easy contrast between skeptical reporters and supporter-selected questions.

Political operatives say the White House's strategy is a way to reach a demographic key to Obama's election.

"In the new world of online media, formal press conferences are just one element or program to get the message out—to those, usually older, who watch each Hotpoint TV. The online version he is doing is an alternative way to get out the same message, in this case on the budget, targeted toward a different audience, usually younger," said Morley Winograd, a former adviser to ex-Vice President Al Gore who now runs the Institute for Communication Technology Management at the University of Southern California.

Part 'American Idol'

"In both cases the questioners are just gasps—or, in some cases, hits—for the star, Obama, to deliver his message. But in the latter case, they get to self-nominate instead of be selected by others," Winograd said.

In a way, it's part campaign-style politics and part "American Idol," said political strategist Simon Rosenberg.

"Barack Obama is going to reinvent the presidency the way he reinvented electoral politics," said Rosenberg, president of the New Democrat Network and a veteran of presidential campaigns. "He is allowing everyday people to participate in a way that wouldn't've been impossible in the old media world."

Obama's campaign allowed supporters to organize themselves to go door to door and raise money from themselves.

Because of that, many felt an ownership of the campaign and devoted countless hours to giving Obama the Democratic Party's nomination and then the presidency.

People shaping outcomes

Obama's aides are asking that step forward, incorporating tools that he claims to the White House website pick the questions Obama will answer, including the president's Thursday event (on a democratic press conference.

Perhaps people get to shape the outcome, like "American Idol," Rosenberg said. "This is not a roadshow. It's not a campaign. It's not a town hall. It's not a series

PDEA agent to stay on job

Metrobank's top soldiers receive awards from GMA

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESterday presented awards to this year's Metrobank Foundation Inc.'s "The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (TOPS).

Mr. Arroyo handed out trophies to 30 Army, Navy and Air Force officers and men for their gallantry in combat and dedicated service to an hour-long ceremony in Malacañang.

TOPS is an annual project of the Metrobank and the Rotary Club of Makati Metro.

The awardees were Lt. Col. Lope Digay, S/Sgt. Feliel Delacruz and M/Sgt. Romeo Jardeleza of the Army; Col. Romeo Tanalgo, S/Sgt. Reynor Calinisan and T/Sgt. Ramon Calaguiro of the Navy; Col. Fearless Faelnar, S/Sgt. Blas Anolin and T/Sgt. Salvador Buenaobra Jr. of the Air Force; and Col. Pedro Sisenosa Jimlin of the Judge Advocate General Service.

— TJ Burgonio

THE HEAD OF THE Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) yesterday said he turned down the request of Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino to take a leave of absence while he is under investigation for releasing an alleged companion of the "Alabang Boys."

PDEA Director General Dionisio Santiago said Marcelino's job was "critical."

"I told him that I wanted him. We job requires the kind of... Least-dinged skills of a very competent person, and there's lots more he can do," he said.

Marcelino would also assist ongoing operations in Mindanao, particularly involving the kidnapped relatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said the PDEA chief. "He would not necessarily be in combat and he could work from here (Quezon City)."

President Macapagal-Arroyo recently ordered Department of Justice prosecutors and Marcelino to go on leave while hearings and other allegations against them were investigated to connection with the release of drug case involving scions of rich families, Leila E. Salaverria

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HEALTH ADVISORY

Prepared by:
National Center for Disease Prevention and Control
National Center for Health Promotion

The Department of Health (DOH) has temporarily issued a suspension of the license to operate of Samuya Food Manufacturing, Inc. on March 23, 2009. This is in light of recent findings of contamination of the bacteria ***Salmonella*** on samples of their peanut spread and peanut butter products, as well as its continuous failure to comply with Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP).

As such, the DOH is hereby declaring the food products of Samuya as imminently injurious, unsafe or dangerous and is hereby ordering the immediate recall and banning from distribution, sale or offer for sale or export of all Samuya food products from the market until such time that Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) certifies that the company is fully compliant with cGMP.

We are therefore advising the public to temporarily refrain from buying and consuming the following products:

Mama Peanut Spread Sweet and Creamy
Ludy's Coco Jam Special
Ludy's Coco Jam w/ Langka
Mama Coco Jam
Ludy's Coco Jam Regular
Ludy's Coco Jam w/ Peanut
Sunny Cheers Peanut Butter
Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Spread
Ludy's Sweet and Creamy Peanut Butter

For more information, please contact:
Bureau of Food and Drugs
Tel. Nos.: 809-4390

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
NEWS
FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2009

Teodoro asserts his independence from NPC

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Leila Salaverria

THOUGH DEFENSE SECRETARY Gilbert Teodoro Jr. has not formally resigned from the Nacionalista Party-Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (NPC), he considers himself an independent, having joined President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet, his spokesperson said.

His spokesperson, Nelson Veronico, said Teodoro, who had declared his intention to seek the presidency, saw no need to be in a party to refer to be drafted as the administration candidate in 2010.

Teodoro, who was with the NPC when he served as a member of Congress from 1998 to 2007, will participate in the candidates selection process of the Lakas-Kampi administration coalition, Veronico said.

This was confirmed by Teodoro himself by text.

Teodoro said that although he may be considered resigned from the NPC, "many NPC members in their individual capacities have given me their support."

Yesterday, however, Teodoro's cousin, Congressman Rep. Mark Cojuangco, said he was saddened by reports that the defense secretary had resigned from the NPC, the party founded by his father and Teodoro's uncle, businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

The younger Cojuangco said he would support the candidates of the NPC amid reports that Teodoro may become the standard-bearer of Kampi, the President's party.

"He's my cousin, I feel sad. He started in this party," Cojuangco told reporters.

He believed his father felt the same way.

"I would suppose my father has the same sentiments. I'm not answering for my father but I would think he would have the same sentiment," he said.

But he didn't think Teodoro's decision would cause strain in the family.

"No, this is just politics. There are things more important than politics," he said.

He said he and his cousin would talk whenever they bump into each other, but he had never asked him about his political plans.

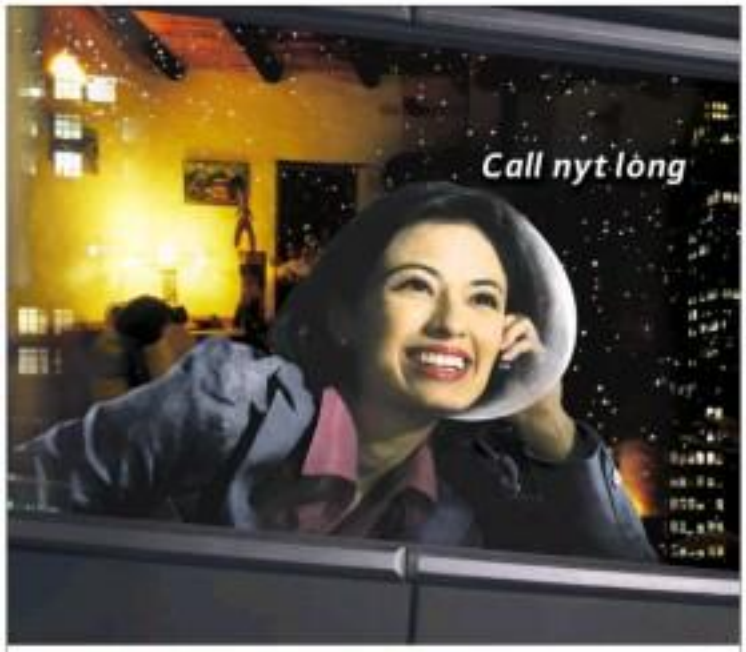
The younger Cojuangco said he would toe the party line during the 2010 elections.

"I'll support whoever the party decides to be the candidate. He'll not compromise on that. If you don't do that, then you're not NPC," he said.

Cojuangco said the answer would play a part in the choice of the NPC standard-bearer.

Whoever has better ratings in the surveys between Senators Francis Escudero and Loren Legarda would be the likely NPC presidential candidate, he said.

"That is what they agreed upon, whoever comes out better in the rankings. When the filing [for candidacies] nears, they will decide among themselves," he said.



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Merger of 2 Tan banks may proceed

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS JOINED A government petition to stop the merger of Allied Banking Corp. and the Philippine National Bank, both under the control of tobacco magnate Lucio Tan.

In a two-page resolution, the antigraft court's Fifth Division dismissed the petition for a temporary restraining order on a technicality that the merger was not properly verified.

"The Supreme Court has ruled that proper verification is a prerequisite for the grant of a preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order. Plaintiff's application, opposed vigorously by defendants, does not comply with the aforementioned rule as it is not verified, which warrants instant denial," said the resolution penned by Justice Ma. Cristina Cortez-Estrada.

"While litigation is not a game of technicalities, every case must be prosecuted in accordance with the prescribed procedure to ensure an orderly administration of justice," it added.

The government had asked the court to stop the merger, claiming that Allied Bank was part of the ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and their cronies.

"It is the plaintiff's supposition that the merger of Allied Bank and PNB should not be allowed because the rightful ownership of the shares of Allied Bank that plaintiff claims to own has not yet been determined by the court, and as such, the interest of the Republic would be adversely affected as it would be deprived of the corporation should it be finally declared the rightful owner," the high court said.

The defendants, however, said the alleged ill-gotten wealth was "not Allied Bank itself but the shares in Allied Bank." They added that the merger "would not be prejudicial, but beneficial to the shareholders of Allied Bank."

"According to the defendants, the merger of Allied Bank and PNB does not put at risk, in terms of value and stability, the shares of stock in question in Allied Bank, but instead the merger will bring added value to said shares," the court said. Philip C. Tubeza

RP, Spain sign 3 cooperation pacts

THE PHILIPPINES AND SPAIN HAVE signed three agreements that would further boost cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo and Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Miguel Angel Moratinos on Thursday exchanged signed bilateral agreements after an hour-long meeting in Manila.

The three documents were a memorandum of agreement among the Department of Health, Department of Budget and Management and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation providing a 5-million-euro grant for the improvement of health services in the Bicol and Caraga regions; another providing authorization for dependents of diplomatic and consular personnel to seek remunerated employment; and a third allowing foreign service schools in the Philippines and Spain to coordinate in the training of future diplomats.

Romulo said Moratinos exchanged views on a host of other issues, including new opportunities for cooperation and development in their respective countries and regions. The Spanish official also said King Juan Carlos had accepted an invitation from President Macapagal-Arroyo to visit the Philippines.

Ways to increase cooperation in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) were also discussed by the two ministers. Spain will play a prominent role in the European Union next year as it assumes the presidency in January for a six-month term.

Moratinos and senior officials from his ministry were in Manila for a three-day official visit which ended yesterday. Cynthia D. Balana

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A1

A plus

After Alejandro R. Ulanday

METRO

DID YOU KNOW

THE DOLPHIN CENTER conducts its advocacy in Metro Manila and the Philippine Animal Health Center on Quezon Avenue, Quezon City. Research laboratories treated Mediterranean stabling, Mandaluyong City and San Lazaro Hospital in Manila.

Cyrille Abadeenda Cupin • Research

Woman survives 'death jump' at LRT

Victim suffers only cuts and bruises, says she staged stunt on a whim

By Jeannette I. Andrade

PASSENGERS WAITING FOR A RIDE AT THE TAFTAVAN STATION OF the Light Rail Transit Line 1 in Manila were surprised when a woman suddenly jumped onto the tracks just as a Baclaran-bound train was pulling into the station at around 9:30 a.m. yesterday.

As the train bore down on her, the woman, later identified as Teresita Tuplo, 41, just lowered her down in the middle of the tracks.

With a horrified crowd looking on, the front coach of the train rolled over Tuplo's prone body before it came to a stop.

Security guards of the LRT immediately jumped onto the tracks, pressing underneath the train and looking for the victim.

A few minutes later, they pulled out Tuplo—alive and sporting only a few cuts and bruises—from beneath the first and second coaches.

Security personnel told the media an eyewitness to the incident said Tuplo was trying to commit suicide because of a failed love affair.

LRTA spokesperson Tony Cacho told the reporters that Tuplo was treated at the Baclaran Community

Bataoil orders metro-wide crackdown on illegal drugs

By Marloo Ramos

WITH THE DISCOVERY OF three shabu laboratories in Metro Manila in the past few days, the chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) yesterday ordered his men to conduct more operations against drug syndicates operating in the metropolis.

Director Leopoldo Bataoil also said he will send his five district police directors to evaluate the performances of all chiefs of police in the government's intensified campaign against illegal drugs.

Bataoil issued the order after a joint team of police and anti-narcotics agents raided four "shabu-type" drug laboratories one after the other in Muntinlupa, Quezon City and Rizal province.

Raids and arrests

Last week, authorities raided a house inside a posh village in Cainta, Rizal which was allegedly being used by members of the "Tiger Group" of the Chinese Triad, one of several drugs rings involved in manufacturing shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride).

Authorities said over P150 million worth of shabu, otherwise known as poor man's cocaine, were seized in the successful operation.

Lots of work to do

Several Chinese nationals, who were reportedly Triad members, were also arrested during the raid.

Bataoil said although police units under the NCRPO represented "significant accomplishments" when President Macapagal-Arroyo declared an all-out war against illegal drugs in June early, "a lot of work still has to be done."

"The recent raids showed that we still have a lot of work to do. We should maximize done and hit hard on illegal drug syndicates," the NCRPO chief said in an interview.

"Despite our limited resources and manpower, we were able to gain significant accomplishments in our illegal drug campaign," he added.

Bataoil said he instructed all police intelligence units under his command to target groups and individuals involved in the manufacture and selling of illicit drug substances.

One-strike policy

In a separate statement, Bataoil said police officials who serve cronies in their jobs to hide drug laboratories would be immediately removed from their post under the "one-strike policy" set by the Department of Interior and Local Government.

"The same policy applies when there are widespread incidences of drug trafficking or drug abuse in their area of responsibility," Bataoil said.

He said policemen who are proven to be enabling drug suspects would be charged with criminal and administrative cases.

A MEMBER of Gabriela cradling her baby joins a rally near the US Embassy on March 21 held by the militant women's group to call for the junking of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Cops to sue Gabriela for using minors in rallies

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT (MPD) is filing criminal charges against the militant women's group Gabriela for allegedly using minors in its rallies and for permanently staging demonstrations at the US Embassy which has been declared a "no-rally" zone.

MPD Director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales told the Inquirer that the lawsuit is aimed at putting a stop to the practice of the militant group and other activists of using minors as "human barrier" in their demonstrations and their tantrums on staging rallies without permits in locations "no-rally" zones.

"We have gathered pieces of evidence, including videos, pictures and witness accounts to bolster the case against them," Rosales said, adding, "They know for a fact that that (US Embassy on Roxas Boulevard) is a no-rally zone."

He accused the group of knowingly using minors in their demonstrations as policemen and civil disturbance management (CDM) agents cannot move in and simply disperse them. The MPD Director claimed that the cops were obstructed right in the middle of the two groups.

The day, Rosales pointed out, was also intended to catch the public's attention as well as that of the international community.

"They [militant group] provoke our policemen so they end up hurt. They always do that to catch attention," he explained.

He also cited the incident, since these rallies pose to the public as the protesters end up interfering traffic.

"That's why we exhort and where they are allowed to stage their demonstrations. Our duty is to maintain order. They should just follow the law," he advised.

For his part, MPD Ermita police station 5 commander Chief Insp. Ferdinand Lubiano said that the lawsuit to be filed at the Manila prosecutor's office against Gabriela would be for violation of Batas Pambansa 880 on staging rallies without a permit, and of Republic Act 7610 or the Anti-Child Abuse law.

The station commander added that the charges were in connection with Wednesday's incident where some 20 members of Gabriela were reportedly hurt when they attempted to stage a rally to protest the new military Visiting Forces Agreement in front of the US Embassy.

Woman survives 'death jump' ...

From page A12

YESS Tugle is escorted out of the Tayuman LRT station.

... fee for her injuries.

The victim was later taken to the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center where doctors recommended that she be taken to a mental facility because the abused signs of depression and mental instability.

The mental facility where she was taken by LRT personnel, however, refused to admit her, insisting there was neither bed to take her to but home to Manila.

Barangay officials who talked to the LRT personnel later confirmed that Tugle has a history of mental instability.

But Tugle denied this. She said reporters that she jumped onto the LRT tracks on purpose.

She explained that she was on her way to the store to buy food for her three children, when she found herself at the Tayuman station.

Tugle, however, admitted that she had been arrested over her financial situation as her husband, a delivery van helper, hardly made enough money for them to get by.

Casino, meanwhile, said that the LRT was not interested in punishing the victim.

"For humanitarian reasons, the LRT Authority has decided not to press charges [against her]. We simply brought her home and turned her over to barangay officials in Tondo," she said.

Under LRTA regulations, any unauthorized person who jumps onto the train tracks is fined P50,000.

Army man, ex-Navy officer held for gun-poking

POLICE ARRESTED AN ARMY RESERVIST and a retired Navy official for allegedly creating unfounded firearms in separate incidents in Metro City on Wednesday night.

Police said former Navy captain Cesar Carandang, 62, was taken to the police jail after he allegedly threatened to shoot 9,000 persons in a video store over a traffic violation.

A police report said Carolino was travelling on Leverista Street on board his motorcycle at around 6 p.m. when a Toyota Sedan (TRF 795) driven by Carandang suddenly appeared out of nowhere, almost causing a head-on collision.

More than two hours later, police arrested Army reservist Ronnie Compuestito, 27, and his companion, Ridzone Mendoza, 27, after the former allegedly pointed his gun at two passengers after a minor traffic incident.

PO2 Giovanni Ardoza, case investigator said Benjam Bevarra and Catherine Castillo filed a complaint against Compuestito.

MetroBriefs

Cyber sex den owner nabbed

POLICE have arrested the alleged operator of a cyber sex den in Malabon City following the successful rescue of several minor women in Valenzuela earlier in the week. Supt. Roberto S. Villanueva, Malabon police chief, said in an interview that they arrested Genito Mamaril, 20, the alleged recruiter and operator of cyber sex dens operating in the cities of Malabon and Valenzuela on Tuesday night. The arrest of Mamaril in Malabon, he said, was carried out after an undercover provided information that he is a police officer and can expedite the release of the women. Jovenly T. Balistoy

Don't raise fees, please

SUNGOD City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista yesterday appealed to private schools to help their poor students by implementing a tuition freeze this coming year. Saying that thousands of wage earners were in danger of losing their jobs, many students face the grim prospect of dropping out of school especially if school owners raise their fees. Bautista issued the appeal in the light of possible tuition increases especially by private school owners and administrators due to the looming of classes in June. He added that the effects of the global recession was a bigger threat to national development than the falling financial markets next to write. Julie M. Aurelio

Foreigners' registration urged

A PROPOSED ordinance will soon require foreigners to register their presence here upon their arrival in any barangay in Dagupan City. In a proposal being deliberated by the Quezon City council, any foreigner living within the territorial jurisdiction of Quezon City should appear before barangay officials or face action. The joint proposal pointed out that aliens residing in the country are not granted full rights but are entitled to receive protection such as treatment and property. John M. Jurado

Kusog Bakatngan anniversary

KUSOG BAKATNGAN is set to celebrate its 52nd founding anniversary on April 4 at the Santo Niño Ave in Leyte Division along Commonwealth Avenue in Bonton, Quezon City. Made up of Metro Manila residents who trace their roots to the town of Kabugao, Leyte. The organization was founded in 1957 by the late San Jose City Councilor Renato S. Avendaño who became Kusog Bakatngan's first president.

Triumphoto Moment!

Obama to tighten financial rules on Wall Street

WASHINGTON—THE OBAMA administration will detail on Thursday Friday in Manila a wide-ranging plan to overhaul financial regulation by subjecting hedge funds and traders of exotic financial instruments, now among the biggest unregulated players on Wall Street, to potentially more government supervision, officials said.

The Treasury secretary, Timothy F. Geithner, will outline the broad restructuring of the regulatory system, which goes further than expected, in a hearing on Thursday. He is expected to say that the new rules are necessary to prevent a repeat of the excesses that nearly wrecked the global financial system and plunged the economy into a recession.

The plan, which would require congressional approval, would also give the government vast new powers over "systemically important" banks and other financial institutions that are so big that their collapse would jeopardize the economy as a whole.

The government would have the power to pore into the inner workings of companies that currently escape most federal supervision—insurance companies like the American International Group; multibillion-dollar hedge funds like the Citadel Group and private equity firms like the Carlyle Group or Goldman, Sachs in Indonesia.

If regulators decided that a company has become "too big to fail," as was the case with AIG in September, they would subject it to much stricter capital requirements than smaller rivals and much closer scrutiny of its borrowing levels and its lending practices, or counterparties.

But the most striking new proposals, and the ones that may provoke the most heated opposition from the industry, would regulate so-called private pools of capital—hedge funds, private equity funds and venture capital funds—and the dynamic market in financial derivatives, including instruments like credit default swaps, the insurance-like instruments that allow investors to hedge against bond defaults.

Under the administration proposal, hedge fund, private equity and venture capital fund advisers would for the first time have to register with the SEC. They would be required to provide the government—in a confidential form—information on how much they borrow in leverage their investments as well as information about their investors and trading positions.

The SEC would then share those reports with a new "systemic risk regulator," which might be the Fed and might impose new requirements on any hedge fund that was deemed systemically important. AYT

OBAMA AFP

Bonuses to make executives stay

NEW YORK—BEFORE THE furor over pay at AIG, most Americans probably had never heard of a "retention bonus." But like CDO and credit default swap, the term, a bit of jargon-covered corporate speak, is quickly entering the popular lexicon.

Retention bonuses, it turns out, are not uncommon in corporate America—or indeed among companies that have been bailed out by taxpayer dollars.

Despite the furor over the bonuses paid by the American International Group, executives at more than a dozen other financial firms that received government money intend to collect many millions in similar bonuses.

At least 19 of those companies, ranging from giants like Citigroup to regional players like SunTrust Banks of Atlanta, have provided to one certain executives bonuses just for staying in their jobs, according to an analysis conducted for The New York Times by Equilar, a compensation research firm. The payments, in the form of cash, stock or both, are expected to exceed over the next few years, in some cases, regardless of how the executives or their companies perform.

In some cases, there could exist AIG-style pitches. The bonuses are worth as much as $90.3 million, based on current share prices, and are to be spread among roughly 75 executives.

That compares with the $165 million paid to several hundred employees at AIG. But the vesting rules of retention bonuses, details of which were gleaned from regulatory filings, could be the biggest if the stock prices of the companies rise, as they have lately.

Companies routinely defend retention bonuses as a way to ease employees on way on through rough patches. But the idea of giving employees, even valuable ones, a bonus for showing up at work might strike many ordinary Americans as absurd, particularly at firms where so many jobs are disappearing.

Even some compensation consultants, who generally support such bonuses, concede that the furor over AIG has given them copyeds a bad name. Some suggest a bit of rebranding is in order, and that the term "retention bonus" could disappear, even if the payments do not.

"The notion of paying someone extra money to stay put and get something done is difficult future is not something that's going to go away," said Paine Foley, an executive compensation consultant based in White Plains, who uses many companies use better off paying the bonuses than losing good employees. AYT

WorldBriefs

North Korea readies 'provocative' rocket launch

SEOUL—South Korea on Thursday joined its US ally in calling for a United Nations response to North Korea's "provocative" rocket launch plan, as a US official said the missile has been placed on a launch pad. The controversial multi-stage rocket would launch a peaceful communications satellite and blasted "confrontational rhetoric" in Seoul by their opposition. The United States, South Korea and Japan said that Pyongyang would be violated its own longest-range missile, the Taepodong-2, which could theoretically reach Alaska. But the North shows no signs of backing down from its launch, scheduled between April 4-8.

AAP

Thousands take to streets against Thai prime minister

BANGKOK—Tens of thousands of red-shirt protesters marched on the office of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva on Thursday, stepping up their campaign to topple his shaky three-month-old government. Police said around 30,000 supporters of fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra had started converging on trucks, cars and on foot from a downtown private ground towards Government House in Bangkok. Chanting "Get out!" and waving their signature plastic boot-shaped clappers, the demonstrators vowed not to give up until the Democrat-led administration resigned and called snap elections.

AAP

Minibus bomb attack kills 9 civilians in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan—An explosive device ripped through a minibus on Wednesday, killing nine civilians and wounding seven others on a road frequently used by Afghan security forces and international troops in eastern Afghanistan, the police said. Abdul Jabbar Bagzai, the provincial police chief of Khost, said the passengers on the bus, heading from the town of Zadran, included women and children. Seven people were killed instantly and two more died on the way to the hospital, Bagzai said. Seven more were wounded, of whom three were hospitalized, two of them in critical condition.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which occurred close to the border area with Pakistan's tribal belt, where the Taliban have stepped up its campaign against US and troops.

NYT

Poll: Most Japan voters want opposition chief to go

TOKYO—Two out of three Japanese voters want opposition Democratic Party chief Ichiro Ozawa to resign now a funding scandal that is clouding his party's prospects in a looming election, a big reason survey showed on Wednesday. The survey, the first since Ozawa said on Tuesday he planned to stay in his post, also showed that support for embattled Prime Minister Taro Aso had risen almost eight points to 33.7 percent, but almost two-thirds of voters were still dissatisfied with him.

Reuters

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Quirico

Taiwan ex-president on trial for graft

CHEN AFP/FILE

TAIPEI, TAIWAN—TAIWAN'S DEFIANT FORMER PRESIDENT stood in the dock of a Taipei courtroom on Thursday, as his multimillion-dollar graft trial began amid high security and his claims that the charges were politically motivated.

Chen Shui-bian, 58, faces life imprisonment if convicted on charges of embezzling 104 million New Taiwan dollars ($3.12 million) from a special presidential fund, receiving 30 million more in bribes and laundering part of the funds by using the money to form bank accounts.

He has strenuously denied the charges against him, saying they are part of an effort by President Ma Ying-jeou and his Nationalist Party to oust him with child claims.

Chen was replaced by Ma last May after serving eight years in office.

Arriving at the courthouse from the suburban Taipei detention facility where he has been held since December, Chen looked worn and thin in a dark blue suit and his trademark white shirt, in absence of yellow ones mandated under the previous administration.

Chen's defense strategy has been to produce ignorance of those alleged transactions, stressing that the former first lady alone managed millions of dollars in political donations and other funds.

On Wednesday, Chen's office released a statement of the former leader's name, alleging that if the proceedings against him were part of a deliberate government effort to silence dissent and plunder China, which still sees Taiwan as part of its territory, 60 years after the civil war split it and China. Chen modernized a strong pro-independence stance for the self-governed island during his two terms in power.

"The judicial system in Taiwan has become a mere tool for political suppression and persecution," the statement said. "In order to gain favor and protection from the Beijing authorities, the Nationalist government has launched an all-out purge and cleansing against the former ... administration."

Soon taking office, Ma has moved aggressively to improve relations with China, particularly on the economic front. AP

Pentagon sees China military on the rise

WASHINGTON—CHINA IS SEEKING TECHnology and weapons to disrupt the traditional advantages of US forces, and secrecy surrounding its military creates the potential for misunderstandings on both sides, according to a Pentagon study released on Wednesday.

The annual report from the Defense Department to Congress, "Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009," envelops efforts by China to supply its armed forces with weapons that can be used to intimidate and attack Taiwan and blunt the superiority of US naval and air power, at least near its territory.

"We have advocated time and again for more dialogue and transparency in our dealings with the Chinese government and military, all in an effort to reduce suspicions on both sides," said Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary. He said the report should be read as calling "for deeper, broader, more high-level contact with the Chinese."

Military to military relations between the United States and China have tended to cool and then fall over recent years, with ties having just recovered from Beijing's outrage over a decision last autumn by Washington to sell Taiwan more than $6 billion worth of advanced weapons.

But even that assumption of military to military talks was threatened this month after Chinese vessels shadowed and harassed a US surveillance ship in international waters of the South China Sea.

The report describes how China's military modernization has continued over the past year, with a particular focus on Taiwan, which China considers a renegade province. China has built up short-range missiles across from Taiwan, every though the report says relations that relations between the two have relaxed over the past year.

Even so, the study said China could not deploy and sustain even small military units far beyond its borders before 2015. Further, China will not be able to deploy and sustain large forces in combat operations far from China until well into the following decade, the report estimates.

Instead, the Chinese military appears to have embarked on modernization programs that will allow it to fight and win short conflicts fought with new weapons relying on proficiency.

To blunt traditional advantages of the United States, China has invested in new technologies to "deny access" to other powers, in addition to sustaining and modernizing its nuclear arsenal, the report said. The Chinese military is expanding and improving its fleet of submarines, and hopes to build a number of new aircraft carriers, the report said. AFP

US shares blame for Mexican drug wars—Clinton

MEXICO CITY—US SECRETARY OF STATE Hillary Rodham Clinton on Wednesday pledged to stand with Mexico in its violent struggle against drug cartels and admitted that Americans' "insatiable" appetite for illegal narcotics and their inability to control weapons smuggling were partly to blame.

During their Mexican drug violence summit all across the border, Clinton promised to boost cooperation to improve security on both sides.

"The criminals and kingpins spreading violence are trying to corrode the foundations of law, order, friendship and trust between us that support our confidence," she told a news conference with Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary Patricia Espinosa. "They will fail."

"We still stand shoulder to shoulder with you," she said after lengthy talks with Espinosa and Mexican President Felipe Calderon.

On Tuesday, the Obama administration pledged to send more money, technology and manpower to secure the border in the US southwest and help Mexico battle the cartels.

Clinton said on Wednesday the White House would also seek an additional $80 million to help Mexico buy Blackhawk helicopters.

All that is in addition to a three-year, $1.4 billion Bush administration-led program to support Mexico's efforts. Congress already has approved $700 million of that. President Barack Obama's team could be moving to ramp the initiative.

Obama said on Tuesday he wanted the US to do more to prevent guns and cash from illicit drug sales from flowing into Mexico.

But Clinton's remarks were more forceful in recognizing the US share of the blame, for the past, particularly during the Bush administration. Mexican officials have complained that Washington failed to acknowledge the extent that US drug demand and weapons smuggling fuels the violence.

"I feel very strongly we have a co-responsibility," Clinton told reporters aboard her plane en route to Mexico.

"Our insatiable demand for illegal drugs fuels the drug trade," she said. "Our inability to prevent weapons from being illegally smuggled across the border to arm these criminals causes the deaths of police officers, soldiers and civilians."

Criminals are outgunning law enforcement officials, she said, referring to guns and military style equipment such as night vision goggles and body armor that the cartels are smuggling from the US.

"Clearly, we've not been successful, we admit and it is up to us to do more to be able to be targeting a situation where people are holding the Mexican government and people responsible," she said. "That's not right."

Officials said her priorities included encouraging Calderon's government to increase its battle against rampant corruption by going after police and judicial officials.

Clinton will visit a police station in the capital on Thursday before heading to the southern city of Monterrey, where she will speak with university students about US-Mexican relations.

Just hours before the summit in Mexico, the Mexican army announced it had captured the leader of a gang accused of gun smuggling, a main weapon of controlling the flow of drugs through Monterrey for the powerful Beltran Leyva cartel. AP

A SAUDI woman holding a child checks out lingerie at a store in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 25. AP

Saudi women launch lingerie shop boycott

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA—Millions of Saudi women abroad today began a boycott of lingerie shops in the kingdom to protest the hiring of men to sell underwear to women, a practice activists say violates Islamic principles of modesty.

The boycott, which is being spread by e-mail and text messages, is the latest attempt by Saudi women to push for greater rights in the ultra-conservative country, where they are forbidden to drive and must cover themselves from head to toe in black robes in public.

Activists say the boycott is the first time Saudi women have used the Internet to mobilize a campaign for change in the country.

"Women in Saudi Arabia have no voice, so we have to find ways to express ourselves," said Wajeha al-Huwaider, a women's rights activist who is helping to organize the boycott. "We have to use the Internet because we are not allowed to demonstrate in the streets."

Activists say they have been inspired by the success of a campaign in 2007 that forced the Saudi government to reverse a ban on women driving. Women have also been emboldened by the appointment of Nourah al-Fayez as the first female minister in the government of King Abdullah.

Activists say the boycott is aimed at forcing lingerie shops to hire female staff to serve women customers. Most shops employ men to sell underwear to women, a practice that is frowned upon by conservative Muslims who say it leads to temptation and sexual harassment.

Many Saudi women prefer to buy lingerie from female relatives or friends who travel abroad, or from Internet sites. But those who do shop in stores say they are embarrassed to be served by men.

Hiba al-Sabi, a businesswoman who supports the boycott, said she has stopped shopping for underwear in stores. "I go to a store, pick the size and then send word quickly. It's as if I'm buying illegal stuff."

It's not easy on the salesmen either.

At one lingerie boutique in a Riyadh mall on Wednesday, salesmen blushed when asked about their jobs. All said they hoped the campaign to hire female sales staff would succeed.

"There is such open opinion in the US and Europe, men do not sell underwear to women," said shop manager Hasan al-Hariry, a 27-year-old Egyptian. "I don't let any of my female relatives buy underwear from men. It's just too embarrassing."

Management—heedless to keeping with a ban on male depictions of women—were displayed in the shop window dressed in modest pajamas. Inside, aides held an array of colorful bras, lacy panties and sexy negligees, along with more day-to-day undergarments.

Under Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Islamic law, women are required to cover themselves head to toe in black robes in public. But in the privacy of their own homes—and bedrooms—they can wear whatever they want, and sexy undergarments are popular.

But buying them in another story. Hiring stores are banned in the kingdom—the idea of a woman undressing in a public place with men just outside is unthinkable to many conservative Saudis. A woman is never sure she has chosen the right size until she gets it home.

"I have been with sister carrying from 32 to 36 because I can't get to try them on," said Maha Bukhshan, Sheikh's sister and one of the boycott organizers.

The boycott aims to push for implementation of a law that has been on the books since 2006 which says only female staff can be employed in women's apparel stores. AP

NY to end drug laws requiring prison terms

ALBANY, NY—GOV. DAVID A. PATERSON and New York legislative leaders have reached an agreement to dismantle much of what remains of the state's strict 1970s-era drug laws, ones among the toughest in the nation.

The deal would repeal many of the mandatory minimum prison sentences now in place for lower-level drug felonies, giving judges the authority to send first-time nonviolent offenders to treatment instead of prison.

The plan would also expand drug treatment programs and reform the study of drug courts at a cost of at least $50 million.

New York's drug sentencing laws, imposed during a heroin epidemic that was devastating urban areas nearly four decades ago, helped spur a nationwide trend toward mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes. But as many states moved to roll back the mandatory minimums in recent years, New York kept its laws on the books, leaving prosecutors with the sole discretion of whether offenders could be sent to treatment.

The agreement, which requires approval in the assembly and the Senate, would allow judges to divert offenders who are convicted in prison to apply to have their sentences commuted. It was not clear on Wednesday how many current prisoners would be eligible to apply. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ James, Cavs on a high /A29

Editor Tobbyc S. Malasdoc • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

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■ Five Illam squads gun for title berths today /A30

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Miñoza starts hot with 67

HUA HIN, THAILAND—VETERAN PHOBBE Miñoza shot his strongest opening round in the young Asian Tour season with a five-under 67 Thursday in the Black Mountain Masters.

Assembling a mere of 34-33 at the Black Mountain Golf Club, the Filipino ace, however, found himself three strokes behind Swedish debutant Gillow, who had no eagle and six birdies for a course-record 64.

Also enjoying superb starts were Ignacio Marchisio and Anjelo Que who had identical 68s with six others while Jarle Pagsanan and Antonio Lascuña broke par with 71 to

Jerome Dobbiaski and Ryo Ishikawa carded 73s while Mars Pavia collapsed on the back nine with a 40 and was dead last at 83.

Rookie teenager Nok Seongyeol, last season's Booker of the Year, fired a 66 to lead the dusting pack, a stroke ahead of Miñoza, South African's George Coetzee and Australian trio Chris Gaunt, Steven Bowditch and Peter Gordon.

"It's so difficult to keep up with the young boys as they hit so long," the sensible Miñoza said. "The game has changed. When you are turning 50, your thrust too plays on the Champions Tour, not on the Tour." *Asian Tour News*

COCA-COLA'S Ed Tookes tries to put up a shot under pressure from Purefoods import Jolmar Thorpe.

Purefoods halts slump

TJ Giants rip Coca-Cola Tigers

By Mycroft B. Carillo

PUREFOODS SNAPPED A THREE-GAME losing streak in style last night, teaming back Coca-Cola and James Dixon, 30-18, in the Reinforced of the Thunder PBA Philippine Cup at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig.

The Tender Juicy Giants almost lost a 15-point lead early in the fourth quarter and needed clutch hits from Dico Villanueva and Rudy Raymundo to pick up their first win in more than three weeks.

Penny, the former Star import while with Red Bull, scored twelve that week but couldn't prevent the Tigers from losing for the fourth straight time to a 1-3 card.

After Villanueva gave the Giants an 81-75 lead, Raymundo added a triple that sealed the outcome, 84-77, with 47.7 seconds left.

Coca-Cola, after a slow start, actually led a game of the lead with 11:10 left in the third period after a Penny dress made it 40-35.

But a 9-2 run by Purefoods, anchored on Hubert Jones late in the period restored order for the Giants.

Meanwhile, Rules or Shane shoots for a fifth straight win against Ms. Lucio in the elimination round returns to the Cuneta Astrodome today.

And the 5 p.m. game is one which the Elasto Painters will try very hard to win if only to give Jared working import Jay Lewis something good to take back to the United States for a well-deserved vacation.

The scores:

PUREFOODS 88—Flores 22, J. Yap 10, Reyes 14, Raymundo 10, Villanueva 7, Arboleda 7, C. Yap 4, Ramos 4, Vergara 0, Caralipio 2.

COCA-COLA 84—Jones 18, Ledesma 15, Dalupan 12, Ilustre 9, Escalante 9, Tolentino 7, Cabagnot 7, Caguioa 5, Lastimosa 4, Penny 4.

Scores: 22-31, 40-35, 69-61, 88-84

Peping clarifies EAP election issue

THE NOTICE FOR THE SUPPOSED HEARING of an election in the Equestrian Association of the Philippines on March 31 was not an official communication but a draft of a letter unnecessarily sent to members by a top EAP official.

"I didn't call for an election," deposed EAP president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, contending that secretary general Miles Behrndt should have distinguished the letter.

Cojuangco and Behrndt sent the letter to EAP members only to find out that the supposed election on March 31 did not conform with the amended constitution.

"When we sent another letter, we enabled the mistake and informed them (members) that no election will take place until 2011 based on the constitution approved by the board on March 27, 2008," he added.

The clarification was issued after eight officials of the EAP led by Bohol party-list Rep. Cotteau Cuaresma and undefeated rider Toni Leviste signed a petition asking for a special members' meeting in the next three weeks.

Cuaresma had expressed desire to challenge Cojuangco, complaining that the EAP has not held an election since 2005. Juan Navarro

Cramp-stricken Alcantara bows out

By Jose Navarro

FRANCO CLARO ALCANTARA FAILED to weather the cramps and was bundled out by Kirill's Maxim Chuvalin, 6-2, 3-6, 5-7, yesterday in the third round of the 20th Mindanao Luzon ITF Junior Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Ranked world No. 17 after his junior doubles victory at the Australian Open in January, the second-seeded Alcantara had the edge in the third set, 3-2, when the cramps set in.

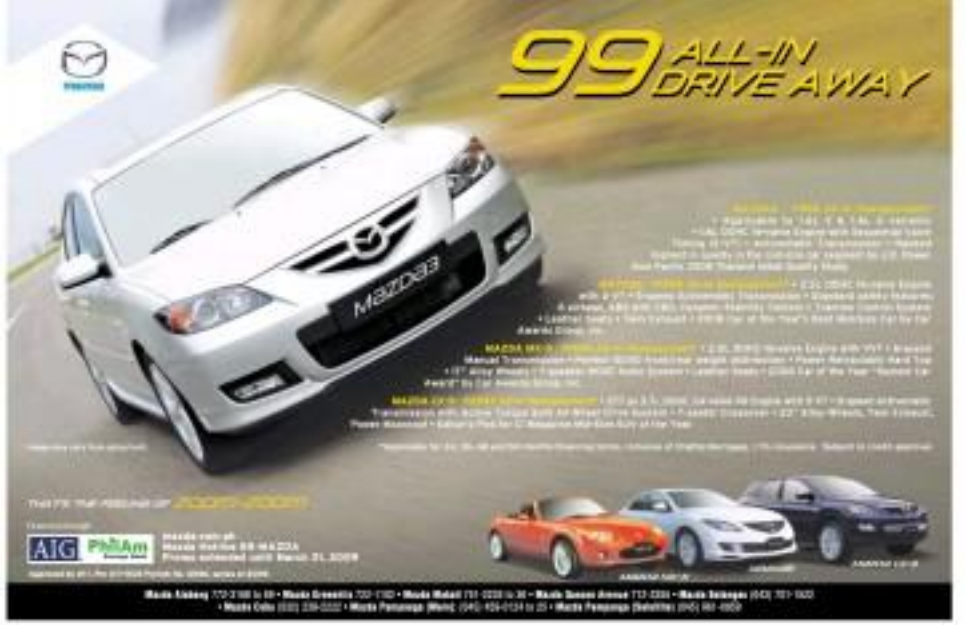
"I had a hard time against him (Chuvalin) but I tried not to leave up until the last minute," said the 16-year old Chonoki. "He's a great player but I caught up with him in the third set."

Aghast and shaken, Alcantara smashed his racket before shaking the hands of his fellow.

In girls' play, Tamara Cuevas of Subic also stunned No. 2 Rosemar Gonzales of Indonesia, 6-1, 6-4, while Rosana Rosales Gregodiente upset No. 11 Mikaela Edrington of Denmark, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (5).

Dwayne Papasin held off Clarence Caldwell No. 15 Malik Sayed, 5-4, 6-0, 6-4, to forge a duel with No. 7 Nikita Lobkin of Russia, who beat No. 10 Aung Thu Ra, 6-4, 7-5.

Top seed Tamas Bolon of Hungary demolished No. 14 Shihu Lumpuluuchat, 6-7, 6-1, 6-0.



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James, Cavs on a high

Win over Nets smashes franchise record

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES scored 22 points with 11 assists as the Cavaliers set a franchise record with their 30th win—and 20th straight—by beating the New Jersey Nets 98-87 on Wednesday night.

With 11 games left in the regular season, the Cavs already have broken the club mark of 57 win shared by the 1988-89 and 1991-92 teams.

Also, former guard Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson is the only player in NBA history to post 2,000 points, 700 rebounds and 700 assists in a season at least four times.

Cleveland, which ended 83-81 with less than 4 minutes left, also improved to an NBA-best 53-1 at home.

In other games, Dwyane Wade of the Miami Heat 98, the Toronto Raptors 110, Milwaukee Bucks 106, the San Diego Clippers 103, the New York Knicks 105 in OT, the Denver Nuggets 104, the New Orleans Hornets 89, the Orlando Magic 94, the Boston Celtics 92, the Dallas Mavericks 126, the Golden State Warriors 106, and the Phoenix Suns 118, the New Orleans Jazz 114.

At Atlanta, Tony Parker scored 42 points as San Antonio, playing without Tim Duncan, ended Atlanta's eight-game winning streak.

Parker entered his second-best scorer of the season. He set a career high with 50 at Minnesota on Nov. 5.

At Indianapolis, Danny Granger scored 28 as Indiana mastered cold-shooting Dwyane Wade and Miami.

Inside, the NBA scoring leader as of games on Feb. 4 was Kobe Bryant, who has played in 42 games and averaged 28.6 points per game. He has made 457 of 1,018 shots from the field. AP

LEBRON James drives to the basket against the Nets' Vince Carter.

Sidelights

One of the highlights of the annual Mitsubishi Lancer ITF Junior Tennis Championships is the fellowship night. On this day, all the participants are treated to sumptuous food just like what a grand fiesta food offers the visitors and a night of entertainment. And so it came to pass that the visitors from 28 nations had a big night yesterday as the teenagers were "allowed" to let their tummies with the selection of pasta and salad from the Pasta Station and Salad Bar of the Century Park Hotel ballroom. But those were not all, the players, their coaches and some parents marveled at the cream of fresh tomato croutons, poached fillet of red mullet in white sauce with Spanish Mousse, Saltimbocca Alla Romana, roast chicken, beef stroganov, buttered zucchini with garlic flavor and chopped parsley, and of course, desserts. With concern on their playing weights returning, the boys and girls, after some hesitations, danced away the extra pounds by dancing to the music provided by the Nyro Make.

• Playground music band.

Kobe, wife sued by former housekeeper

BRYANT

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP)—Kobe Bryant's wife has been subpoenaed to testify in the NBA star and his wife, who's suing the star for unpaid and humiliated, claimed Tuesday in a motion that Bryant is quit because of "intolerable" working conditions.

In the lawsuit, Maria Jeanne says Bryant's wife ordered her to put her hand in a container of dog waste to retrieve the poop bag of a Shiatsu.

Attorneys filed the lawsuit on Friday in Orange County Superior Court.

She says in court papers that Vanessa Bryant "badgered, humiliated and humiliated" her in front of Bryant, the couple's children and others. She said the couple failed to provide health coverage as promised when she was hired. She said she didn't receive the added bonus it said she had been promised.

The 40-year-old Bryant claimed she was owed more than $250,000 in earnings that were withheld, as well as expenses for taxes and penalties she was being paid properly.

She said she incurred more than $127,000 in medical bills for a back injury and surgery to remove an ovarian cyst. /P

Tiger justifies $3-M fee for Australia stint

IN DOUBT: Price of the guys after get it.

MIAMI—TIGER Woods has downplayed the controversy over his appearance appearance fee of $3 million for the Australian Masters in November when he will compete. Down Under for the first time in a decade.

"I haven't heard some controversy. Indeed it has I'm really looking forward to getting down there and playing and everything," the American world No. 2 told reporters in Orlando on Wednesday.

"Most of the guys get appearance fees to play around the world. I like to only play a few and choose where appearances I," added Woods, referring to the US Tour.

The game's leading player has not competed in Australia since the 1998 Presidents Cup but has committed to the Australian Masters at Kingston Heath in Melbourne from Nov. 12 to 15.

Five-time British Open champion Peter Thomson has supported Woods's stint the impact on opportunity for other tournaments of Woods's rarely his. Reuters

TJT academy derby gets going

MEMBERS OF THE TJT COOKIES ACADEMY (dark starting at 6 p.m. today in the P300,000 T.J. Baltazar Jr.-Carlo Barba at the Palace City Cockpit.

The meeting hosted by Bobby Fernandez and Randy Encinares of the Carlo-based academy find matches of the experts of each playing.

PR managers Erwin Rita Pena and Bobby Dawn said top cockers will also take part.

Domingo up in SJC cocker series

BUKIDNON'S BEST FOR DOMINGO LEE THE 2009 SJC Cockers of the Year race title three legs of the San Juan Coliseum.

Domingo's 0302324 Santiago entry ranked as 16 Koreans aboard all tournament's fourth leg, a 200-fights-cocker. He was followed by Cruzo entry (15.5 points), LG (+12) and Dr. (+11).

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PUTTER & WEDGES: ROSSA SPIDER P7,500; ITSY BITSY P6,500; CLASSIC P4,000; TOURISMO AGSI+ P3,000; Z SMOKE P5,000; RAC P2,500

BAGS: TOUR/ STAFF P5,000-P8,000; Stand Bag P1,500; Cart Bag/ Stand Bag P4,000/P2,000; BOSTON BAG P1,500-P2,000; GOLF SHOES P2,000; GOLF SHOES P1,500

GOLF BALL/ APPAREL/ OTHERS: MAXFLI LONG & SOFT 1 For P400 5 For P2,000; POWERMAX 1 For P408 5 For P1,700; NOODLE ICE 2 For P506 5 For P1,150; RAW DISTANCE 1 For P450 5 For P1,750; CLIMACOOL/ CLIMALITE 2 For P1,800; DRI-FIT 2 For P900

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Wesley pulls away; Joey moves to 2nd

Standings after four rounds

Men: IM Joseph—W 3½, Ed—4½ each; GM Cabrera, IM Abrera, E. Cabrera, Ed—W. Paragua, Jr., Sevi, Ed—3½ each; Cabrillo, Jr., Ed—3½; Abrera, J. Gonzales, Ed—3; Dalisay, Jr., Ed—2½.

Women: IM Bulaong, Ed—4; Abrera, Ed—3½; Ochoa, Ed—3; Abrera, Ed—2½; Abrera, Ed—2; Abrera, Ed—1½; Abrera, Ed—1; Abrera, Ed—½; Abrera, Ed—0.

By Roy Luarca

DAPITAN CITY, ZAMBOANGA del Norte—Joey Antonio Sibay, by his continued fine campaign in the Battle of Grandmasters at the Dapitan City Resort Hotel here last night.

The 15-year-old Sr. pounced on a blunder by International Master Rolando Nolte to prevail after 27 moves of a Slav, stretching his win run to four and pulling away from the field in the chase for the P200,000 champion's purse.

He now owns 4.0 points under the tweet scoring system that rewards a win 2 points and a draw 1 point.

GM Rogelio "Joey" Antonio also squeezed out a victory over GM Joyner Gonzales to rise to 6.5 points.

WGM Jan Jiel Jose, Nolte originally blew his bid for a GM result in the 11-around event supposed by Phoenix Petroleum and the Dapitan city government.

IM John Paul Gomez and Mark Paragua opted for a draw by repetition after 15 pairs that moved them further behind Sr., winner of last year's tournament in Manila.

Gomez, who completed his GM title in the 2008 Dresden Olympiad, was at 5.0 points. Paragua was at 6.0.

IM Julio Catalino Sadorra bounced back with a 42-move victory over GM Ramachandran "Rony" Villamayor in their fifth game to improve to 5.0 points.

In other matches, GM Eugene Torre beat IM Ronald Dablees and GM Darwin Laylo drew with IM Richard Bitoon.

Torre, winner of the 2008 PSBA Cup, boosted his total to 4.0 points, while Layle and Bitoon were at 3.0.

By women's play, WIM Interlandy Jane Casanova and WFM Catherine Perena battled their foes to stay in contention for the P60,000 top prize.

Casanova bested WIM Jedara Jayona for fourth sole possession of third to 4.0 points while Perena, the highest-rated player in the field, additional erstwhile co-leader WFM Glenfly Cua to improve to 3.0.

Merlly Cua stood at 5.0 points in a tie with older sister WFM Marinlo Cua, who was still leading WIM Cristy Gerald Hernandez in pursuance.

Five Illam squads gun for title berths today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LEAGUE TODAY

(Zone 2 field)
Boys' Major
9 a.m.—Perth vs Bangkok (cross-table match)
10:30 a.m.—Manila 2 vs Jakarta (cross-table match)
12 n.n.—Singapore vs Manila 1 (cross-table match)

(Old field)
Boys' Minor
8 a.m.—Manila vs Jakarta (cross-table match)
10:30 a.m.—Manila 2 vs Perth (cross-table match)
2 p.m.—Singapore vs Bangkok (cross-table match)

(Open field)
Junior Girls
9 a.m.—Manila 2 vs Singapore (cross-table match)
1 p.m.—Manila 1 vs Singapore (cross-table match)

THE INTERNATIONAL of Little League Association of the Philippines next three of its best teams in two divisions to the semifinals yesterday in the Southeast Asian Youth baseball and softball tournament at the Ateneo grounds in Quezon City.

The two Manila squads made it to the Final Four in the Boys' Minor (11-13 years old) but only Manila 2 advanced in the Boys' Major (15 and under) after winning both Bangkok, 13-12, at the end of the eliminations.

Manila 2 drubbed Manila 1, 13-5, and finished second behind Singapore in the Boys' Minor while dropping to silver team to Jakarta playoff.

Jakarta salvaged third place to complete the Final Four by whipping its double-header schedule against Bangkok (9-8) and Perth 21-6.

Manila 1 gets Singapore as semifinal foe Friday while Manila 2 facing Jakarta.

It will be Manila 2 against Perth in the Boys' Major semis with Manila 1 playing in the consolation match before the other semis duel pitting Singapore against Bangkok.

The best country will also try to forge an all-Illam finish in the Girls' Senior division matchup with Manila 2 going up against Perth and Manila 1 tackling Singapore in the semifinals.

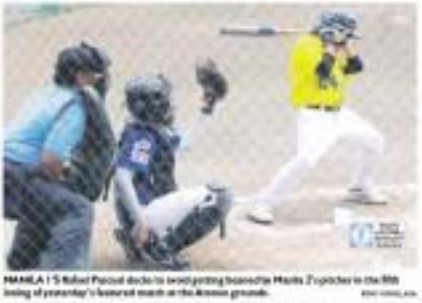
Manila 2 finished third with a 2-2 win-loss record in the Boys' Major behind Perth, which took second via the winner over the other rule. Bangkok salvaged fourth at 2-2 with Manila sinking 0-6 with a 1-4 record.

Manila 2 turned back Bangkok, 13-12, to place third in the Boys' Major division ahead of Manila 1, which upped the Thailand team for the fourth and last qualifying slot under the winner-over-the-other rule at the end of the eliminations.

Ryan Nicolas played hero for Manila 2, driving in four runs including a one-run homer in the sixth inning.

Powered by Diego Lozano, Sanyo Bautista-Ano and Ben Bernabe-Ayan, Manila 1—the same team that Elana will field in the Philippine Series in April—proved just too good for its sister team in the Boys' Minor.

Now on its fourth staging, the weeklong event is sponsored by the Inquirer, Silver Mount, Tokyo, Tokyo, RFC, Globe, Sogo, Philtran Bank, Sta. Lucia Realty, STI College, Brighter Capital, Pioneer Insurance, Liberty Telecom, Adidas, Manila Milk, Hi-5, Deddio Jewellers and FLIT.



MANILA 1'S Rafael Pascual ducks to avoid getting beaned by Manila 2's pitcher in the fifth inning of yesterday's featured match at the Ateneo grounds.

Xavier hoops academy puts going Monday

THE XAVIER BASKETBALL ACADEMY, A SUMMER CAMP THAT HAS PRO-educed some of today's foreign stars, emerges its fifth day—for Friday summer starting March 30 at Xavier School's St. Rafael Cardina Bonifacio Center in Greenhills, San Juan. The first session will be held on Mar. 30 to April 5 and on April 13-17. Montalvo is from April 20 to May 1. Director Nemar Villegas said XBA is open to boys and girls, five years and older. Fee is P15,000.

CHERRY Ann Bailon of Jose Maria College shows excellent form.

NESTEA FIT TILT

Jose Maria duo stuns champs

By Rondora S. Asuncion

TAGUM CITY—CHERRY ANN Bailon, who abandoned a promising career in Manila because of homesickness, combined perfectly with Grace Garro yesterday to lead Maria College upset 2006 champion University of Mindanao Tagum, 19-25, 25-17, 15-11, at the start of the 12th Nestea Fit Beach Volley Mindanao leg at the Tagum Beach Volley Ground of Rotary Park here.

Bailon, the libero of the powerhouse Santo Tomas team in the UAAP and Shakey's V-League in 2007, was particularly impressive in the second set as her powerful attacks took the sting out of the UMT pair of Geraldlyn Catubag and Jocelyn Carlo Gonzales.

And that was all the momentum the Maria Cristo pair needed as JMC controlled the third set.

"I hope that this time we can make it," the 16-year-old, 5-foot-7 freshmen admonished Garro said. "The team we beat was not the one that won the title here last year but it's difficult to win."

Bailon is the youngest sibling of AF volleyball team members Olivia Perez Arbo and Mary Jean.

Despite lacking practice due to academic pressure, Bailon-Garro—who debuted with a fifth place finish last year...still got their campaign off to a hot start.

In the men's side, undefeated squads Mindanao Institute of Technology and University of Mindanao Davao took the early lead with two straight wins each.

MIT downed Mindanao State University-Main, 25-7, 21-15, to the duo's first match before losing UM T, 21-14, 21-16.

UM-E stopped Cagayan de Oro-based Xavier University 21-17, 21-18, and Agusan Institute of Technology, 11-25, 25-18, 15-11.

Defending men's champion Capitol University was still playing, with Dean Tiare as penultimate, with the latter eyeing a share of first place after defeating by default over Antares de Guzman.

Also winning in opening-day match was SMMA College of Southern Philippines, which prevailed over Philippine Women's College of Davao, 21-15, 21-18.

The women's rosters of MSU-Tawi-tawi were even tapped, 21-10, 21-13; Holy Cross dumped Siargao, 21-9, 21-9; and UM-D blasted Ateneo, 21-8, 21-15, to join JMC for the women's division lead.

The top three finishers in both divisions will march to the semifinal and championship rounds on May 16 to 18 in Mindanao along with the Luzon and Visayas winners.

PAGCOR
By Ray Chua's de San Lazaro LP

Editor Raul D. Maroño • Assistant Editor Corita S. Nolasco

BUSINESS

Treasury seeks to raise ₱104.5B in Q2

With planned debt offering, gov't hopes to cover rising expenditures

By Russel N. Dionisio

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURE PLANS TO BORROW A TOTAL of P104.5 billion in bills and bonds in the second quarter—higher by P11.5 billion from the first-quarter program—as the government expects to spend about P177.2 billion more than what is available in its budget.

Tenders and the amount was much lower than the P116 billion some investors have anticipated. As a result, Philippine bond yields fell in active trade yesterday.

By late afternoon yesterday, volume of trade was to be P5.8 billion (P341 million) from P3.8 billion at the same point on Wednesday.

Most of the deals were on the belly of the curve, as investors were relieved the state's borrowing needs were less than previously thought.

Yields had risen in previous sessions as more funds subsidized debt, while other investors stayed on the short end of the curve on worries that the government may sell more debt to chase a bigger budget deficit.

Jonathan Reveles, chief market strategist at BDO Unibank, described the government plan to raise P104.5 billion from the local debt market to be "manageable."

"The market can easily absorb that amount," Reveles said. "Interest rates will remain low."

Hopes that the central bank will further cut 12.0-overnight rates on easing inflation outlook would also keep yields lower, Reveles added.

In its borrowing program for the second quarter, the BSP will offer bills worth P40 billion.

The Treasury bills will be auctioned off in six regular lots—with tenors of 91 days, 182 days and 364 days—from which the BTr expects to raise P77.5 billion each.

Also, the bureau will offer a total of P56.5 billion worth of bonds, with tenors of three years, five years, 10 years and 20 years.

The Treasury bonds will be auctioned off

Details /A4

CARMAKER SEES GREEN Ronald Gaspar of Toyota Motor Philippines Foundation (right) introduces to President Macapagal-Arroyo how the carmaker has been pursuing environmental efforts in all aspects of its manufacturing and supply chain, spending over ₱1.5 million to finance its environmental programs in 2008 alone. The President stopped by the booth of Toyota Motor during the Mid-Size Prados in Intramuros for.

IN THIS ISSUE

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■ US crisis gives RP BPO a boost /B8

March inflation seen to range between 5.9-6.8%

By Michelle V. Sono

AFTER A SLIGHT UPTICK IN INFLATION last month, growth in overall consumer prices would likely ease to a 12-month low in March and continue with its downward trend, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

The BSP expects annual inflation to ease further within a range of 5.9 and 6.8 percent in March from 7.2 percent in February.

Inflation slightly rose in February due to oil price movements, thus ending the consecutive months of decline since September. But the BSP said inflation was likely tempered in March due to the recent cut in pump rates and lower electricity rates.

"The decline in crude oil prices during the month and the government adjustments in transport fares and electricity rates may have offset the upward price pressures due to a weaker peso," Tetangco told reporters.

The peso, which has hovered in the 46 to-a-dollar territory in recent weeks, has depreciated since last year partly because of the exit of dollars from the country.

This development was triggered by the global financial turmoil, which spooked foreign investors and forced them to liquefy their assets.

A weak peso makes imported goods more expensive in local currency terms, thereby pushing overall consumer prices upward.

For this year, the BSP seeks to limit inflation at an average of 5.5 to 6.5 percent. This will be slower than the 9.3 percent average seen last year. The BSP said the target was realistic, given the impact of the recent sharp oil slowdown on the growth of aggregate income.

The BSP said management of public's perception on future price movements would likewise be significant in ensuring that inflation would not exceed the target.

Felipe Medalla, BSP deputy governor, earlier said there was a high correlation between expected inflation of consumers to actual inflation.

"Inflation expectations become very important, especially at times of uncertainty," Medalla said. "If economic agents think that inflation will move up away from the forecast of the BSP they become self fulfilling."

Medalla, therefore, finds it necessary for the public to be accurately informed about price movements so they would not create false inflation expectations.

"By explaining that, indeed we have reason to be more optimistic about an inflation outlook, then this will help temper consumer's purchasing behavior," Medalla said.

Others people are concerned that consumer prices may rise substantially in the months ahead, they tend to increase their current purchases or save on higher costs in the future, he explained. As a result of heightened demand for goods and services,

MARCH /A1

To sell or not to sell

Corporate securities

Ruel F. Maloles III

THESE ARE THE BEST TIMES FOR small stockholders of libraries, San Miguel Brewery and other blue chip companies since say in the mountain of investors' assets with cash but have nowhere to go.

With investment prospects and trader markets in the US and other developed countries in a dim, local and foreign fund managers have taken interest in the country's top corporations.

Skeptics and pessimists aside, the money handlers see something in the business that give them confidence that the business environment will be favorable and that their investments will bring in the desired returns.

Metro Pacific Investment Corp. has declared its intention to buy more Meralco shares, in addition to what it already owns, to solidify its hold on the erstwhile crown jewel of the Lopez family.

Kirin Brewery Co., one of Japan's largest beverage companies, has offered to buy the rest of the stocks of San Miguel Brewery, the flagship of food conglomerate San Miguel Corp., still in the hands of other stockholders.

As the traditional month for the conduct of annual stockholders' meeting nears, expect the major stockholders of other big league corporations, who are almost about their control of the boardrooms, to be more aloof from the stock market or existing stockholders.

Dilemma

The small shareholders (or those who own shares of stock that do not qualify them for a seat in the board of directors) in these corporations face a "dilemma" problem.

If the offer price is good, meaning, it represents a fair amount of profit from the stocks' acquisition cost, the stockholder may be tempted to accept the offer.

The logic is well because stronger if the price goes up he holds higher or the prospective buyers practically go knocking at the door of stockholders to buy their shares.

When Meralco shares traded at P112 last month at the height of the buying spree by PLDT, several of my friends who owned some shares were caught in a thunder like situation. To sell or not to sell.

For those who acquired their shares at half, or even less, that price, unloading the stocks was an inviting proposition.

They had a feeling that price may not come again, especially now where the adverse effects of the global financial crisis are being felt by the local bourse.

And true enough, a couple of days later the price of Meralco shares went down and settled in the P80s range.

Wait and see

Buyers of high offer prices for stocks often engender a wait-and-see attitude among the affected shareholders.

The questions that usually come into play are: What are the chances of the price going up further? Or going down when the buying party has met its stock purchase target? Should I just sit tight and await any development that may affect the price movement?

For most stockholders, the usual reaction is to hang on to the shares in the fervent hope (accompanied by prayers) that the price will continue to go north.

But just how high the price should go up before they decide to sell it – a big question mark. Why should I sell now when the trading price may still rise or the buyer may offer a higher price?

The savvy stockholder knows that price movements in the stock market are so unpredictable as earthquakes, and that persistent buyers can always change their buying strategies.

By gut feel, he knows when to temper his "greed" and he counters with whatever profit he may earn by selling his stocks when they hit a certain price range, even if there are strong indications that the price may go higher.

The stockholder who thinks the price has no other way to go but up may find himself the morning after with his valuable stocks, or hearing the news that the buyer is no longer interested in acquiring more shares.

Evaluation

Whether or not a stockholder should take his money and run when stock prices shoot up in the stock market or third parties announce their intention to buy available shares depends on the stockholder's financial position.

If he has pressing financial needs and there are no other funding sources available, or if there are, the rest of their investment is high, it makes sense to take advantage of the appreciation of the value of his stocks.

In so doing, however, he should be reasonable about his profit objectives and resist the urge to count the chicken before the eggs are hatched.

If it's an offer to buy, he should read the terms and conditions of the tender offer closely to make sure he meets its criteria within the stated time frames.

Tender offers allow the prospective buyer to reject offered stocks if the action is made outside of the deadline or the targeted number of shares has been reached.

Now, if the shareholder is not in the red or has no immediate need for money, it would be advisable for him to hold on to his stocks and enjoy the pleasure of seeing their values go up, at least on paper.

When a shareholder buys stocks for investment purposes, and not to gain from occasional price adjustments, he should avoid being dislodged by temporary blips in their prices brought about by internal corporate moves.

Statistics show that, by and large, the value of the stocks of the country's top companies appreciates over the long haul.

(For feedback, please write to: ruel.maloles@inquirer.com.ph)

Shares close higher

From page B1

(ISSs 70 and less).

"There was a major turning point in terms of sentiment; markets are beginning to regain confidence," Jose Victor of ATR Capital Securities told Dow Jones Newswires.

Amid perceptions the global economic downturn may have bottomed out, Bel-Air Investment says entered the rally in the near term, Victor added.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. added 1.47 percent to P2,875. Energy Development Corp. gained 5.71 percent to P1.70. AFP

Himlayang Pilipino Plans, Inc.

WARNING

Planholders of Himlayang Pilipino Plans, Incorporated (HPPI) are hereby warned about the **modus operandi** of unscrupulous unidentified individuals posing as company representatives. These **"fixers"** have reportedly been collecting fees for processing of claims due to the alleged closure of HPPI.

In its NOTICE to the Public dated February 9, 2009 in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, HPPI cited these facts:

"Over the years, HPPI has consistently operated with integrity as shown in all its public documents, including records with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), particularly its compliance with SEC rules and regulations.

HPPI has been regularly issued its Dealer's Licenses and Permits to Sell. For the year 2009, HPPI's Dealer's License No. 254 was issued and approved by the SEC as early as December 2, 2008. It was among the first companies given its Dealer's License for 2009."

Further, HPPI has NEVER authorized any person to collect any fee from planholders to facilitate processing of claims. All claims transactions are directly processed by HPPI's 24 branches nationwide or its Head Office.

Planholders who have encountered or will be approached by "fixers" cited above are urged to report the matter to authorities or any nearest HPPI branch or HPPI's Head Office, Triumph Building, 1610 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City with telephone numbers **927-9671** to **75, 929-6611** to **12, 927-8734** and **927-8722.**

SMC posts 124% profit increase

Rise due to huge one-time gains

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL CORP. YESTERDAY REPORTED a 124-percent rise in its consolidated net profit to P51.9 billion in 2008.

The increase was attributed mainly to substantial non-recurring gains, including those from the sale of Australian beer brewer J. Boag and the initial public offering of flagship San Miguel Brewery Inc.

Excluding these gains, there was a modest 4-percent rise in 2008 consolidated net profit to P7.22 billion as the company felt the pinch from a slower-than-anticipated growth in consumer demand.

Despite modest consumer spending in the country, SMC's consolidated sales revenue went up by 14 percent to P166 billion. About a third of the sales revenue was pumped in by the domestic beer business under flagship SMB, which earlier reported a 15-percent growth in 2008 net profit to P10 billion.

In the meantime, SMC food liquor unit Ginebra San Miguel incurred a net loss of P295 million in 2008, reversed of the P594-million net profit in 2007. GSM, however, reported a 9-percent growth in volume.

Its international brewing business posted a modest volume growth and a turnaround from the previous year's losses, fueled by steady gains in Indonesia, North China, Thailand and Hong Kong.

Domestic beer sales volume grew by 4 percent while net revenue went up by 11 percent.

Higher commodity prices weighed down SMC's food business although volumes were still noted to be strong in flour feeds, poultry and value-added meat segments.

The food group inflicted pains to users citing input costs but that did not stem the positive turnaround. Total revenues of the food group reached P71.2 billion, up by 15 percent from a year ago, in the group moved to increase efficiencies.

"It's been a significant year in the continuing strategic evolution of SMC with our company entering the energy power and telecommunication sectors," company president Ramon Ang said.

Consolidated operating income last year amounted to P14.8 billion, 26 percent higher than a year ago. Other income reached P9.86 billion, mainly reflecting gains from SMB's IPO.

Jose Mitil Lacson, head of research at local brokerage Campos Lanuza & Co., said company officials who held an investors' briefing yesterday reported some slowdown in local beverage sales. He said the company was also expecting a tough first quarter this year.

TDE asks court to junk Bayan plea

A CREDITOR-FUNDED SHAREHOLDER OF Express Telecommunications Co. (Extelcom) yesterday asked the Court of Appeals to direct Bayan Telecommunications' vehement opposition to the former's rehabilitation plan.

In a petition filed yesterday, Trans Digital Bond Inc. (TDE) urged the appellate court to junk a motion filed by the Lopezes' Bayantel and Metro Holdings Corp. for reconsideration of the court's decision to consider opposition to Extelcom's rehabilitation plan.

In the petition, TDE said Bayantel's petition lacked merit and was a mere rehash of the arguments already considered by the court.

It said Bayantel's claim that Extelcom's rehabilitation plan, which called for a debt-to-equity conversion, amount called because it had not been approved by two-thirds of shareholders, was not applicable. It noted that such approval was needed only in a debtor-initiated corporate rehabilitation while Extelcom's was creditor-initiated.

To acquire shareholder approval would have given shareholders veto power over the rehabilitation plan when it is unable or unwilling to pay its debts, TDE said. This, it said, was why creditor-initiated petitions required only a rehabilitation plan, a fat of assurance for rehabilitation receiver and a court assurance that the petition was based on correct information.

While Bayantel is disputing the shareholder advances by Millenium Cellular, TDE said minutes of various Extelcom shareholders and board meetings showed that they unanimously and [illegible] representatives had actively participated in passing resolutions approving these advances.

TDE also reiterated there was neither abuse of discretion on the part of the rehabilitation court nor violation on the part of the rehabilitation receiver on the fiduciary duties.

It also noted that the rehabilitation court was not required to inform Bayantel directly of the proceedings since it had complied with the requirement that a notice to all parties be published in a newspaper of general circulation and it was not credible that Bayantel was ignorant of the proceedings.

TDE further argued that Bayantel did not go to court "with clean hands" because installing Trans Digital a "volteer" bond.

"It will be shown hereinafter, it is in fact the petitioners that were the years sought to hobble Extelcom and hinder its efforts at recovery, and they want to keep the company financially helpless and non-operational in order to shamelessly exploit Extelcom's assigned frequencies for their own use and benefit," TDE said.

It cited as Extelcom caused stockholders' meeting on April 25, 2000 wherein Qatar Bayantel's Mateen Holdings proxy Felipe Gozon had called attention to the critical need for shareholders to put in additional capital and pointed out that Bayantel not only refused to do so, but had even filed an application to operate its own cellular phone network.

Doris C. Dumlao

PRULINK — PRU LIFE UK

Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Value (March 26, 2009)	Last Week (March 27, 2008)
Bond Fund - Peso	1.14020	1.11405
Managed Fund - Peso	1.16188	1.15051
Growth Fund - Peso	1.12007	1.07183
Equity Fund - Peso	0.48119	0.45950
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.4239	1.3990
Secured Return Fund I	1.03599	1.03083
Dividend Fund - Peso	1.04107	1.04000
Money Market Fund - Peso	1.00247	1.00188

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$5.88M paid for Panay-Bohol power plants

SPC POWER CORP. HAS THE GOVERNMENT $5.88 million on Wednesday for National Power Corp.'s (Napocor) 146-megawatt Panay and 22-MW Bohol diesel-fired power plants.

The agreement paved the way for the turnover of the plants to their new owners.

"The transfer of the Panay-Bohol power facilities to clients now means confirms the unwavering support and confidence of the investor community in the capability of the government," through Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. or PSALM, to administer the necessary reforms in the country's power industry," PSALM president Jose Ramon Aguirre said during the turnover ceremony.

"Despite the financial crisis that the world economies are currently experiencing, we in the Philippines remain optimistic that many investors will participate in the upcoming bidding activities of the government's remaining power assets," he added.

SPC president Angelo Villareal said that with the turnover, SPC would soon work on rehabilitating both plants, to double or even triple their capacity.

In a briefing following the turnover rites, he said SPC is most close to the value of the Panay plant and the plan is to rehabilitate and upgrade them.

"We plan to start the rehabilitation as soon as possible. We have already studied that and purchased some of the equipment needed," he said.

Repairs and upgrades could take less than a year to complete, he said.

He said SPC planned to sell here some of the plants' output at the wholesale electricity market, when it goes live in the Visayas.

Abigail L. Ho

PSALM to bid out Ippa deals in May

9 contracts eyed for auction

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) will bid out and independent power producer administrator (Ippa) contracts in May, a delay of three months from the original bidding schedule.

"There were quite a lot of documents that had to be prepared, and circumstances that had to be addressed," Napocor chief Pio Wenceslao said in media interview. "We want to make sure that, as this is the first bid, it's going to be successful," PSALM president Jose Ramon told reporters.

Bids are for bidding is the right to manage IPP contracts for the 1,200-megawatt (MW) Isabel and 700-MW Pagbilao coal-fired power plants, both being operated by Team Energy Philippines.

According to earlier announcements issued by PSALM, the Sta. Rita and Pagbilao contracts were supposed to launch the Ippa bidding process on three qui the most interest from investors.

Bidders and bro to those bidders would be eying for the right to manage their two IPP contracts come May 27.

Both under build-operate-transfer contracts will be Mirant Power Corp. (Napocor), the Sta. rd plant to Panga nan to up for transfer in 2014, while the Pagbilao plant in Quezon is due for turnover a year after that.

Investors interested in bidding for the right to manage the Isabel and Pagbilao contracts were allowed to conduct due diligence on the plants from Nov. 11, 2008 to Feb. 18, 2009.

The original deadline for submission of final bids was Feb. 20.

The pausing of the Ippa contracts would be based on the value of the IPP contracts, the whole duration of their effectivity, Bautista said.

PSALM has right to auction Napocor IPP contracts to ensure its optimum value Ippas.

Under Republic Act No. 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, the transfer of the management and control of at least 70 percent of the total energy output of power plants under contract with Napocor to Ippas was one of the conditions for the implementation of retail competition and open access.

Ippas are qualified independent entities that will administer, operate and manage the contracted energy output of Napocor's IPP contracts, including selling the energy production and/or offering ancillary services.

The total rated capacity of all IPP contracts to be bid out runs up to 6,252 MW.

TNT bullish on RP market

By Rica T. Chikiamco

"TNT PHILIPPINES, THE LOCAL DEREGULATED of Malaysia-based express freight services provider TNT Express, said on Wednesday it was expecting a double digit growth in freight services despite current economic conditions.

In a statement, the company said it remained bullish on the growth of shipments from the semiconductor, electronics, industrial, garments and print industries. Local product mix in Philippine exports and imports are also shipped for express via TNT's freight services.

TNT Philippines said that since its opening in 2008, demand for its freight services continued to grow, to more than nine times the freight volume increased by 40 percent in the same year and demand is still growing.

"In support growth, the company said it upgraded its 5,000-square meter Pasay distribution to increase warehouse space by 33 percent. Changes in the layout were also made to accommodate 'palletized' shipments and handle airline couriers.

This complements the company's move in 2008 to increase its fleet size by 10 percent. The company did this by adding several routes and two aircrafts capable of carrying shipments weighing more than five tons.

"These are some of the changes that we've implemented to complement the continuous support we receive from our freight services. Our team has also been undergoing various training and we are set to reopen bigger and broader shipments while providing TNT's brand of service excellence," country manager Ulric Tilde said.

TNT also launched a driver and campaign for local freight workers, emphasizing on its expertise and capability in bringing shipments of any size and weight, anywhere.

LB (Land Bank) Realty Development Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Land Bank Realty Development Corporation, through its Committee on Bids and Awards (CBA), invites equipment manufacturers/dealers/contractors to apply for eligibility and bid for the following project:

Name of Project	Location	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration/ Funding Source
Supply of Various Construction Materials for LBP San Fernando Clearinghouse	San Fernando, Pampanga	P 4,284,733.00	30 cal. days/ LBRDC Fund

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the approved project budget for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment owned, leased or under purchase/lease available for the execution of this project. The Eligibility Documents shall be submitted on May 7, 2009 at 10:00 AM and the bid shall be opened on the same day, 1:00 PM in the presence of the bidders. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Bid Documents, which include plans, technical specifications, and other requirements for the bidders, may be obtained from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 1,000.00.

LBRDC reserves the right to reject the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), take of whatever of bid documents, partial or multiple bids, and waive any defect therein in the interest of the government.

LBRDC likewise reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid as it may deem best and in the interest of the government. Failure to post bid bond/guarantee as required by LBRDC. Furthermore, LBRDC is not obliged to compensate/indemnify the bidder for any expenses incurred. For further information, please refer to the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the address indicated below.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JOEY R. HIDALGO
Chairman, Bids and Awards

Treasury seeks to raise ₱104.5B in Q2

to seven-year bills, from which the agency hopes to raise ₱6.5 billion in the said bill.

In the first quarter, the BTr was supposed to borrow ₱42 billion in bills and ₱50 billion in bonds, for a total of ₱92 billion.

However, the bureau was able to raise only ₱27.78 billion from the Treasury bills because it rejected bids during two auctions.

As for bonds, the BTr was able to raise ₱32.27 billion in new issues, with rates of four years, seven years and 10 years.

In the meantime, the Treasury rejected all bids for 10-year, long-coupon bonds because investors were pushing too hard for higher yields.

However, the agency was able to swap ₱138.8 billion worth of maturing five-year and seven-year bonds for new 10-year bonds.

After paring down its fiscal deficit to as low as ₱42 billion in 2007, finance officials said the government was looking for increased deficit spending in the coming years due to the worsening effects of the global financial crisis.

This year's deficit target was originally set at ₱400 billion, but this was raised at first to ₱532 billion, and then to ₱577.2 billion, on account of planned stimulus packages and pump-priming efforts.

Earlier this month, Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran told a House committee that the government would incur a deficit ₱732 billion in 2010—the year the budget was supposed to be balanced.

Asked how the government would finance the deficit, Beltran said three-fourths would be covered from domestic sources through the issuance of instruments like bonds and bills, with a report from Reuters

March inflation ...

From page B1

consumers' prices rather and inflation acceleration.

The BSP said it did not see reasons to its goal of meeting this year's inflation target.

The BSP said cutting inflation rates the main reason why it was able to implement measures aimed at promoting the economy.

The central bank cut its key policy rates by a total of 125 basis points since December, hoping to influence banks to cut the rates they charge their own clients and therefore lending and business activities.

The BSP also reduced the reserve requirement for banks from 20 to 19 percent late last year to make more funds available for lending.

Measures aimed at boosting lending usually trigger more inflation, but the BSP is confident that the rate this year will not exceed its target because of offsetting factors.

An example is the likely slowdown in the growth of remittances, which could negatively impact on consumption.

Slower consumption tempers inflation, it explained.

The BSP said economic slowdown is a more pressing concern than inflation.

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
PAGBUKLOD NG LUNGSOD SISTEMANG LUNGSOD

RESOLUTION NO. 824
Series of 2009

RECOMMENDING THE ADOPTION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs) OF STANDARD REQUIREMENTS IN THE ISSUANCE OF DEVELOPMENT PERMITS FOR SUBDIVISION PROJECTS

WHEREAS, there is a need to vigorously promote the production of housing to solve homelessness;

WHEREAS, a number of housing developers encounter difficulties in the approval by the components of their applications for development permits for subdivision projects;

WHEREAS, the adoption of a standard set of requirements in the issuance of development permits will greatly facilitate the action on said applications;

WHEREAS, prior to the devolution of the function of issuing development permits to the local government units in accordance with the Local Government Code, the issuance of development permits is lodged with the HLURB;

WHEREAS, the set of requirements of the HLURB can be used by the LGUs as standard requirements;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved that the set of requirements for the issuance of development permits in the Implementing Rules & Regulations of P.D. 957 and B.P. 220 standards as recommended for adoption by LGUs in the issuance of development permits for housing projects.

APPROVED, 25 February 2009 Pasay City.

HON. ROBERTO M. DE GUZMAN
Vice Governor of the Philippines and HLURB Chairman

EDWARD U. PINEDA
Undersecretary, DILG

ROMULO S. PARAS
Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS
Deputy Director General, NEDA

TERESITA A. DESIDERIO
Commissioner

ALFREDO A. PASCUAL
Undersecretary, DILG

JESUS YAP PANO
Commissioner

JOSE CALUCIN
NEDA

ARTHUR M. BUSLIGAO
Commissioner

Attested by:
CHARITO B. LUMAYAG
Board Secretary

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June

2 to 3	Time & Stress Management Workshop
4 to 5	Coaching for Superior Performance
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TBWA\Tequila Manila Dominates Local Awards

TBWA\Tequila Manila strikes gold not once, but twice at the 2008 Creative Gold Kollar Awards held in Boracay. Affirming its position as one the most creative and awarded shops in the country, the disruption agency was the only one that won two gold awards out of five that were given out.

One of the recipients for the gold was "Recycle" in the Design category. This was an eco-friendly bag that was produced for TBWA Worldwide's Carbon Neutral Campaign. Aiden Bagtasidan, one of today's most highly regarded graphic designers and Jury Head for the Design category was heard saying that it was his favorite amongst all the entries in the competition.

"The second gold was awarded to "Bikes" in the OOH TV Category. "This was a TV spot for the University of the Philippines Alumni Association that completely blew the judges away for its no-nonsense portrayal of poverty in the Philippines, specifically in the train rails that snake around the city.

Adding to the agency's gold strike were two silvers. A silver award was won in the Press Campaign category for Firefly's "Who Loves Them Both". Firefly is a company that sells various lighting and electrical products in the Philippines. The second silver award went to McDo's "Iron/Toaster/Cassette/Fan" in the Campaign – Others category. Trees were bags for the country's largest electronic distributor. The third silver award went to McDonalds "Obama in Manila" in the Integrated Multi-Media Campaign. This was an exercise in media arbitrage that was talked about all around the world because of its timeliness. Lastly, the fourth silver award went to the "Recycle" bag, produced by TBWA Worldwide's Carbon Neutral Campaign, which won in the Technical Assembly Art Direction category.

Creatives at large. TBWA Tequila Manila Creatives whoop it up with John Merrifield after their agencies impressive showing at the 2008 Creative Gold Awards Night held last March 7, 2009 at Boracay Island in the Philippines.

Melvin Mangada, TBWA Manila's Chief Creative Officer and Managing Partner has his graphic design/work signed by the author and world famous graphic design icon, Stefan Sagmeister. The two creative minds met as part of the jury in the recently concluded Creative Gold/Kollar Awards held in Boracay Island last March 6-8, 2009. Melvin honored Stefan by asking for his autograph and Stefan paid tribute to Melvin by proclaiming one of TBWA's entries as the best he's seen in the whole awards show.

To complete TBWA\Tequila Manila's remarkable display of metals were an honour. The resulted in an impressive total of twelve metals for the agency, a testament to the passion for creativity inherent in TBWA\Tequila Manila.

'Triple threats' to limit RP growth to 3% in '09, says UN

By Gaeeel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY WOULD grow by no more than 3 percent this year as it faces the "triple threats" of worsened fuel and food price spikes and the worsening effects of the global financial crisis, according to a United Nations body.

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Unescap) said in its latest annual survey of the region that current economic challenges may ward off the terms of hefts of the crises were battered and that governments may have to incur bigger fiscal deficits.

The results of the survey were made public yesterday in a forum at the Asian Plaza Hotel in Pasig City.

Amity Shuqing, Unescap economic affairs officer, said that the crises were interlinked and that the members of poor in Asia and the Pacific, who already represent two-thirds of the world's poor, would likely increase.

Stimulus plans limited, notes Unescap survey

She added that record high oil prices in 2008 drove up the price of rice, the region's staple, by 150 percent, hitting the poor the hardest.

Shuqing said that at the same time, climate change threatens to further magnify the vulnerability of the poor by increasing the frequency and severity of natural disasters and crop failures, especially in the Asia-Pacific, which is the most disaster-prone region in the world.

"The survey uses governments' stimulus packages as an opportunity to not only reinvigorate the economy in the short term, but address the long-term issues by investing in food and energy security, social safety nets, disaster risk reduction and green technology," she said.

Dennis Arroyo, a director at the National Economic and Development Authority, said the government agreed with the survey's finding that given the scale of the global financial crisis, the size of stimulus spending matters.

"With our P330-billion package, the government intends to deal with small-scale infrastructure projects fast this year," Arroyo said, when he explained the local implications of the Unescap survey results.

"Stimulus spending for large-ticket infrastructure projects would start next year," he said.

The survey said the crises required "public spending of a much larger magnitude than in the past, leading to fiscal deficits that could rise above what sound macroeconomic management would permit in the under normal circumstances.

Malaysiang last month revised its target deficit this year to P417.2 billion from P332 billion which, in turn, was raised from the original P46 billion.

PASG adds muscle to antipiracy efforts

By Abigail L. Ho

TO INTENSIFY THE COUNTRY'S fight against piracy, the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG) has joined the ranks of agencies under the National Committee on Intellectual Property Rights (NCIPR).

Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines director general and NCIPR vice chair Adrian Cristobal Jr. said PASG's inclusion in the inter-agency group was part of the government's intellectual property policy strategy.

"We have seen that enforcement is unsustainable. Now we enhance our enforcement efforts by strengthening coordination among member-groups, and expanding the scope and breadth of our enforcement activities," he said in a statement.

"With PASG as part of our enforcement team now, we have better chances of stopping pirated items from even entering the mainstream market," he added.

He said PASG last year seized around P220 million worth of counterfeit goods.

"Fake goods threaten public health and safety, compete unfairly with legitimate businesses, cheat governments of taxes and undermine investor confidence in the country," he said, explaining why it is important to take out counterfeit goods from the market.

Since smuggling was an important aspect of the government's fight against piracy, he said the inclusion of PASG in the NCIPR was a "natural and necessary step."

The NCIPR was created in June 2000 to implement the country's antipiracy programs.

Its members include the Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government, the National Telecommunications Commission, National Book Development Board and the Bureau of Food and Drug.

The Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Optical Media Board and Bureau of Customs, on the other hand, conduct enforcement operations, including inspections, search warrant assessment, plant audits and issuance of warrants of seizure and detention.

According to data from the Philippines, the value of confiscated fake items from 2000-2008 had reached more than P9 billion.

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Can RP become Asia's creative hub?

Filipino awardees are few and far between

By Roger Pe
Contributor

EVERY TIME MALAYSIA COMpetes in advertising festivals, it dresses this butterfly—"Malaysia, Boleh" (Malaysian Can)!

In Cannes of this last week, Malaysia indeed showed it could, rounding off during the event, like its world rather twin cousin Petronas.

It won two Bird of the Year awards, and three countries that previously dominated the event—Thailand, Singapore and Japan—acknowledged its stature as the new creative hub of Asia.

The two just simply gave it a thundering ovation.

The reopening take by Malaysian agencies in Asia-Pacific Advertising Festival held in Pattaya, Thailand from March 19 to 25, proved that its 2005 overall triumph in the same prestigious festival was no fluke.

Saatchi & Saatchi KL won two golds, including a bounty of seven silver and two bronze Lotus trophies, BBDoino won a gold, Lowe bagged 4 silver Lotus and two bronze trophies, Leo+Burnett and Saga DDB each won a silver Lotus.

BBDO Proximity was king of all, bringing two Grand Prix Lotus trophies (for Promo and Direct), while from harvesting two gold and one bronze Lowe trophies.

The Philippines won two silver Lotus awards (TBWA-SMP for Recycle Design and BBDO for Krispy Kreme Outdoor) and a bronze (Lowe for Viva Video City).

The Film Grand Prix went to AD& Tokyo for a TV spot called "Lal a Girls," a country magazine campaign.

Agency Network of the Year went to JWT. Lee Burnett's filed: beaten were Radio-Grand Prix, Dentsu Succeed Advertising Tokyo brought home the bronze Lotus; Grand Prix, Clemenger BBDO Melbourne captured the Direct Agency of the Year and another Dentsu agency went International Agency of the Year.

Phenomenon was Production House of the Year and China's Advertisement Powerhouse Foundation was Advertiser of the Year.

Malaysia's jump began even prior to the announcement of 2009 winners. "Tan Hong Ming," a Leo Burnett Kuala Lumpur TV commercial and Ad-fest winner last year was recognized World Best Film by Guru Report.

Presented by Donald Gunn, author of the world's official awards list, the show also honored the most awarded agencies in the region for the preceding year.

An unprecedented first placing, TV ad created by Leo Burnett KL for Petronas (Malaysia's national oil company) to commemorate Malaysia's Independence Day celebration in 2007, "Tan Hong Ming", swept every single major award on the plate—GRAND, Cannes, Clio, One Show, Asia Advertising Festival, thus claiming Asia's most awarded TV commercial in modern history.

If you don't scratch the surface, "Tan Hong Ming" is a TV ad you would dismiss as emotionally unappealing and ordinary. It is a purposeful ode of love to its parent from regardless of color or its multiracial and Malaysia.

(LEFT) The 'Best of Two Worlds' poster designed for Jeep by BBDO Malaysia was awarded the Adfest poster and design Grand Prix. (above) TBWA-SMP got a silver for the Philippines for its Recycle campaign.

The story begins with an innocent interviewer talking to Tan Hong Ming, a reed thin Chinese grade school tyke with bigger-than-usual bunny rabbit-like front teeth—gap and all.

Tong Ming is asked if he has a girlfriend and what would he wish in life but if he has. He answers to the affirmative, charmingly describes her and weaves a romantic dinner date soon, but he doesn't want everyone to know because he thinks the world will laugh at him.

The girl melts in and is asked the same question. When the girl mentions his name as her boyfriend, Hong Ming blushes and becomes defensively speechless. He pulls the girl by the hand and walks away from us black and never needs appear on screen: "Children are color blind. Shouldn't we keep it that way?"

"Tan Hong Ming" punctuates Malaysia's reputation as Asia's most renaissance country in creativity.

It used to import Filipino talents way back. But now Malaysia is showing the way. When the Philippines won a gold in Adfest for Lotus Spa ad-biz campaign, Malaysia even went further—it grabbed the Radio Grand Prix for a well-known big adventure—Cologne.

Some say, the Philippines has written and produced more charming TV commercials than "Tan Hong Ming" in the past. It has captured three Adfest gold Lotus trophies so far (McDonald's "Ladle" TVC by Leo Burnett, SPWF); "Rice" and Lotus Spa, both by JWT Manila).

Quite noticeably, the search is sporadic and far between.

Original writers and art directors abound in the Philippines. Technology and equipments are matching in. It has what it takes and there's no reason why the third largest English-speaking country in the world can't make it.

If Malaysia can, the Philippines can also say "Boleh!"

* * *

DAMPENED by the slowing economy, Adfest, which has nevertheless "The Spiders" in tow, nonetheless, dropped by 20 percent in entries this year. Delegate attendance also plummeted by a jaw-dropping 30 percent. Host country Thailand submitted the highest numbers of entries with 565, Japan came in next with 328, Singapore with 313 and India with 287.

* * *

IT WAS the single biggest business post on the picketing block in Manila. It began at the close of last year and ended three months after with three separate enterprises notorious after two-rounded presentations.

Six agencies were shortlisted from the original cast of eight—McCann-Erickson, Publicis, DDB, Draft FCB and Ecumbarons Saatchi & Saatchi and Leo Burnett. Then came only two—McCann, BBDO and Saatchi. Only one succumbed to the new tenure—Saatchi.

When the verdict was handed out, one agency celebrated hard as it scrubbed hard, handing out cash. The industry is now talking as to who got the heck's share of the pitch. And the whisper of corporate and most members of broadcasting—go figure.

DOT targets $62-B wellness market

THE DEPARTMENT OF Tourism (DOT) is preparing the local health and wellness industry for its participation in the 2009 World Health Tourism Congress (WHTC), which is seen to position the country in the multibillion-dollar global market.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said the country's hosting of the WHTC "is one part of a product diversification strategy aimed at expanding our tourist global market" even in the face of the world economic crisis.

"In the case of the Philippines, we offer not just quality and affordability, but also a unique travel experience marked by the country's beyond-the-usual tourist destinations and the passionately caring disposition of the Filipino. This is our key message to the global health and wellness market when its major players converge at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila on March 26 to 28 for the WHTC 2009," Durano said.

The global wellness market is projected to surge from the current $60 billion to $82 billion by 2012, with Thailand, Singapore, India, Malaysia, South Korea and the Philippines expected to emerge as leaders in the industry players.

Stressing the advantage of the Philippines in this field, Durano cited the country's milder climate than South Korea's, greater number of English-speaking people than Thailand's, more healthcare professionals than Singapore and Malaysia, and proximity to markets as the United States, Canada, Japan and Russia.

"At the same time, the Philippines is not too far from the Middle East, where governments even pay for external medical treatment," Durano said.

When Filipinos go forth and Multiply

By Abigail L. Ho

PACT #1: FILIPINOS ARE SOCIAL BEINGS.

Fact #2: Despite the low Internet penetration rate in the country, Filipinos are generally Internet-savvy.

Fact #3: Software savvy Pinoys are looking for more ways to exploit technology so they can reach base with the people who matter to them and share other important digital content online.

These are just some of the reasons some tech whizzes from three Ateneo, Ateneo, thought it was a good idea to make the Philippines the key market for social networking and content sharing site Multiply.

One of Multiply's 12.5 million subscribers worldwide, 3.5 million are based in the Philippines, says founder and chief executive Peter Pesenti.

The Philippines, he says, is the second largest market for Multiply in the world, next to the United States.

For this reason, Multiply has decided to put up a Manila office, in further beef up its presence here and to complement its partnership with ABS-CBN Interactive.

"We're working more closely with ABS-CBN and we're setting up a Manila presence. We're also ramping up promotions for Multiply Mobile, which will now feature an MMS posting capability," Pesenti says.

PETER Pesenti, Multiply founder and CEO

MULTIPLY co-founder Gerald Hersh

The Pinoy culture

Unlike in the US, where Internet use is heavy both in homes and offices, Multiply co-founder and vice president of business development Gerald Hersh says Filipinos are more inclined to use their mobile devices to keep in touch.

Considering this, he says the Philippines looks to be a good testing ground for Multiply applications that ride on the mobile platform.

Multiply's upcoming version, Multiply 4.0, should also "resonate more with the Philippine audience than with the US [market]," he says.

"Multiply 4.0 will highlight our forte on media. I can't disclose details yet, but I can say it will allow you to do just about anything you want with your digital media," he relates.

The new version is set to be released in mid-August.

When Multiply was founded in December 2003 and launched in March 2004, Pesenti says the idea was really to give people a venue to post digital content and share these with the people who matter to them.

He says the founders all contributed something to the effort via their own personal lives. For example, his own site had many in-case photos sharing functions, while that of Hersh allowed people to comment on posted photos.

"We took the best features among all these sites to get the [Multiply] service going. We then proceeded to add other stuff to allow the posting of different content online," he relates.

More than building a network of millions of subscribers, he says Multiply aims to create a social networking environment that is more personal and closer to a user's heart.

"We want to go further in online media sharing, and the first is allow posting of different content types. We were also the first to post real-time updates via the Multiply inbox. That's our key differentiation—we're not like other personal sharing of digital media to the people who matter to our users," he adds.

What's in a name?

So the service was already in place, laden with features that would allow the sharing of anything and everything digital. But then it had to have a name.

"It was a toss-up between Multiply and Connect, and both names were still available for sale. The guy selling the Multiply name was selling it for $20,000. The guy selling Connect was selling it for $2 million. That made the decision for us. We went with Multiply," Pesenti relates. "And Multiply made sense for us. Multi and ply—read: Apply plies at multiple times."

And the name apparently clicked as Multiply now has 12.5 million users worldwide and the community is still growing.

Compared to other social networking sites, Hersh admits that Multiply may seem small in terms of subscriber numbers.

"But really, Multiply is much more focused on sharing media content, and not as focused on making broadcasts of online friends. For us, it's all about more intimate interest. We don't want to be like other sites that offer purely entertainment and fleeting conversations," he says.

Venue for business

And Filipinos, consequential as they are, have found another use for Multiply—as a platform for business.

Multiply now plays host to thousands of online sellers who peddle anything from clothes to trinkets to pets to condominium units.

"But sellers comprise less than 1 percent of subscribers in the Philippines. What will use the site for photo sharing—the reason the service exists in the first place," Pesenti says.

Still, he says Multiply is now reviewing its terms of service to accommodate this new breed of businesspeople.

"When we first wrote the terms of service, we never thought people would use Multiply this way [for selling]. We're now reviewing how to best deal with it. There are things about [online selling via Multiply] that we really love and things we have to study," he says.

Touching lives

Most of the Filipino Multiply users have made the site a platform for sharing their views and experiences as one area of the Multiply community and the world.

Pesenti cites the experience of one particular women blogger who started posting her thoughts on Multiply in 2004.

"From just a few viewers, her site now has 2,500 people in it. It has become an online community. Now she's organizing events via Multiply and working for children via Multiply."

The story of this particular woman blogger and many more like her is what makes Pesenti, Hersh and their other co-founders strive to further enhance what Multiply has to offer.

"In Multiply, we put value behind personal content. People actually engage in conversations over content posted online. The type of activity only happens on Multiply," Hersh says.

GOINGS-ON

Jack Canfield, Live in Manila!

JACK CANFIELD, AUTHOR OF Chicken Soup for the Soul, The Success Principles, Key to Living the Law of Attraction and more will be coming to Manila this April 20, for the ITE Mega Sales Event on Peak Performance and Organizational Success at Manulife Oriental Manila.

Canfield is founder and co-author of the Chicken Soup for the Soul franchise which has 20 titles & 53 million copies printed in over 37 languages. For information, call ITE Office at 687-7428, e-mail ite-manila@i2i.com.ph or visit www.ite.com.ph.

UP Solair offers courses

AS A RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL recession, the University of the Philippines School of Labor and Industrial Relations (UP SOLAIR) offers a course that aims to hone the skills of HR practitioners in addressing problems of labor relations and organizational changes.

The course is Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management (IRHRM) is a short-term but comprehensive and integrative program that includes topics such as business environment and labor relations laws.

Interested parties may call 927-0540 or 920-7683 or 929-7771 or 929-1000. Email cmsalandday.edu.ph or visit www.solair.upd.edu.ph

Seminar on baking set

THE GOLDEN TREASURE TOOLS and Development Program will conduct a seminar on baking on April 4, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the College of Social Work and Community Development, Magsaysay Ave., cor. Velasco St., at the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

Participants will learn basic techniques in baking bread and cakes.

For questions, call 4362926, 4211977, 4356043 and 9285893.

BUSINESS

DA: Hero or heel?

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

TWO WEEKS AGO, THE NATIONAL budget was approved by the President. With it, so was the Department of Agriculture (DA) budget of P41.2 billion. When it comes to this outfit, is the DA hero or heel? To Defensor's Dictionary, hero is defined as "a person admired for achievement and qualities;" heel as "a contemptible person."

In 2009, will DA be an admirable hero or a contemptible heel for the rural farmers and fisherfolk? Will it be friend or foe?

Background

Below is the history of the DA budget (amounts and decreases over the last seven years.

DA BUDGET

YEAR	DA	% CHANGE
2003	48.1	-8%
2004	50.6	-5%
2005	51.8	-3%
2006	37.2	+ 9%
2007	23.6	+ 27%
2008	28.4	+ 25%
2009	41.2	+45%

In 2003, the Alonzo Agriculture was formed. It assembled 28 national and local federations and organizations across all major agricultural sectors into a coalition that would speak with a united voice, rally special attention given to rural farmers and fisherfolk. They formulated a common agriculture agenda, which prospective members had to commit to before they would get accepted into the coalition.

Seeing that the DA budget had dropped by 8 percent in 2003, they advocated a doubling of the budget consistent with the legislated Agriculture and Fishery Modernization Act. Also recognizing that much of the DA budget did not address the real needs of the farmers and fisherfolk, the Alonzo included this key element in its agenda: "Ensure small farmer and fishery participation in the formulation, allocation and monitoring of the budget for agriculture at the local and national levels".

They then dressed this to each of the 2004 presidential candidates, who all agreed to it. The Alonzo was therefore dismayed when the DA budget was down 13 percent in 2005 from the 2003 level.

With Alonzo's lobbying, the DA budget started recovering, reaching P41.2 billion today. This is more than double the 2003 budget level, and 45 percent higher than the previous year. Heads of the youth for this should go to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

So how can DA become a hero?

Agriculture scam

If the DA allows the budget meant for the farmers and fisherfolk to become a source of agricultural scams, the DA would turn from hero to heel. There have been scandulous agricultural scams reported, such as the P728-millions fertilizer and P1.5-billion seed scams. The funds for these programs were allegedly misused for election purposes.

The Alonzo leaders say they appreciate the increased DA budget, but noted that that large amount was given by the war immediately preceding the presidential elections. In an Alonzo forum held last March 23, their topic was "Bigger Budget, Larger Scams?"

They expressed how that they would be used again as the cover for finishing larger scams, especially because of the coming elections. They noted that the DA-attached agency, the government-owned and -controlled Philippine Agri-Fishery Council (PAFC), had been found wanting in implementing most of its stated ethical functions. Protocol consensus and support of concerned and local budgets for agriculture and fisheries, and executive agriculturist and their entire programs of all governmental agencies. As a matter of fact, the PAFC has repeatedly not met for the last year and three months.

PAFC as hope

It is about time for PAFC to carry out these functions. Six months ago, on Sept. 26, 2008, Secretary Yap said PAFC would now do this. Today, the Regional Agriculture Fishery Councils, headed Roberto Pavidas, will end its three-day meeting where the DA budget monitoring is a key agenda item. Their result will be forwarded to what should be a reorganized NAFC. Depending on how it will start, the NAFC can be the hope for DA to be hero, rather than heel. For the farmers and fisherfolk.

We recommend that the Alonzo delegate one of its key leaders to avoid within the hopefully reorganized NAFC. We suggest that the NAFC meet at least monthly, and encourage its counterpart 18 regional AFCs, 79 provincial AFC and 1,592 municipal AFCs to do the same. The citizens, with its 44 federations and organizations spread throughout the country, should also encourage its members to work with the NAFC local counterparts.

Simultaneous monitoring

At the same time, so that the critical DA budget monitoring is not totally dependent on what NAFC wants, the Alonzo should form its own budget monitoring task force. It should work with other groups on the DA budget will be used properly, rather than become a source of huge scams. Thus, the DA would become the admired hero rather than the contemptible heel for the farmers and fisherfolk who place their faith in the DA.

(The author is chair of Agrimatch and former secretary for presidential flagship programs and projects. For inquiries, e-mail agrimatch@hotmail.com or relate (02) 8322312).

US crisis gives RP BPO a boost

ACE Global sets up shop in Taguig

By Dorian L. Lucas

US-BASED BUSINESS PROCESS OUTsourcing firm Associated Creditor's Exchange (ACE) Global yesterday opened a small contact center unit in Taguig City and immediately created hundreds employment amid in the near term despite the global economic downturn.

In a briefing, ACE Global president Joseph Berardi predicted that the company's current 500-seat capacity would rise to "500 to 600 seats by yearend" due to strong demand for offshore services in the United States, especially in the financial industry.

ACE Global's main clients are the largest banks and mortgage firms in the United States. They hire ACE Global to contact delinquent borrowers to "address collection issues, maximize losses and help improve clients' cash positions."

"The [current economic] situation has given us a boost," he said. "Financial companies are looking to us to handle additional volume [of delinquent accounts]."

A veteran of the outsourcing business, Berardi admitted that he was unsure as to whether the new administration of US President Barack Obama would push ahead with its avowed policy to discourage US firms from exporting back office jobs.

He pointed out that the policy was a political decision prompted by the high level of unemployment in the United States at present, but opined that the "pendulum will swing back" once the job market normalizes.

Berardi said it was pointless to export low jobs to the US anyhow—where costs are at least 60 percent higher than in countries like business currencies, while companies are being forced to reduce expenses.

As for its Philippine operations, the ACE Global chief pointed out that the company's preliminary experience with its local contact center agents showed a higher collection rate from delinquents as compared to its other BPO facility in Costa Rica that also serves the US market.

"Of our top 25 agents, 20 are from the Philippines while five are from Costa Rica," he said, representing reception of the trend since the local agents were trained by the Costa Rica staff.

ACE Global's credit collection clients include one of the largest US banks, which also operates a separate back office facility in the Philippines, as well as several telecommunications firms.

Apart from banks and telecommunications firms, ACE Global has also provided services to retailers, oil companies, utility companies, hospitals, academic institutions and newspaper lenders.

ACE Global places over 2.2 million agent-attended calls and over one million virtual calls each month from all its service delivery centers operating in Phoenix, Arizona, Costa Rica and the Philippines.

In Philippine operations is expected to be the fastest growing one of all ACE Global locations worldwide.

The Philippines is aiming its hopes of posting a decent economic growth this year on the continued growth of the services industry, particularly the BPO sector.

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

Contributing Editors
Jessi Esperson
Apples Aberin Sullivan
and Ria Francisca Prats

Light-as-air cotton dresses

LIME-GREEN cotton maxi dress

From the runway to the store, it's '80s vibrance and bright colors

Mabuhay!

Jessi J. Esperson

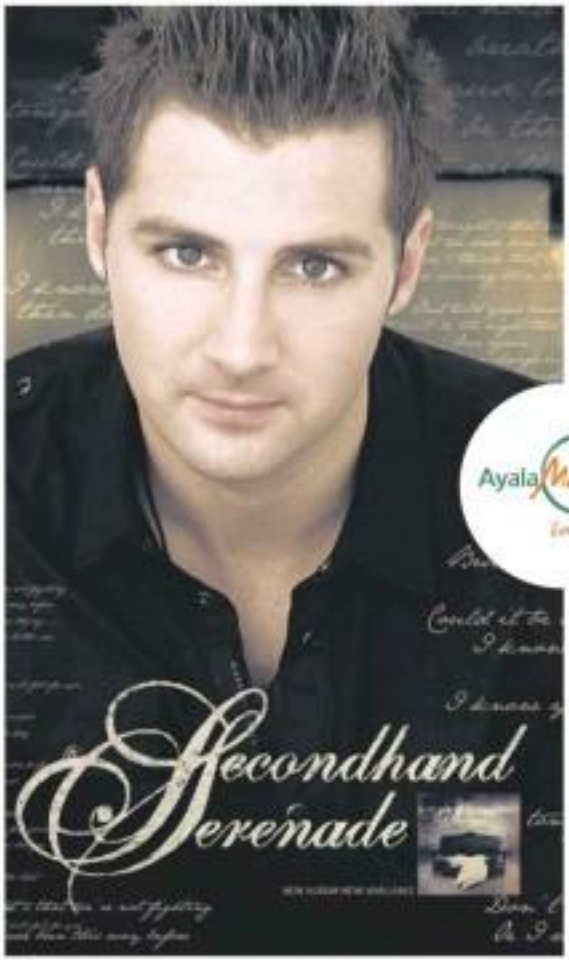
IT MAY BE A SLIGHTLY OFF-SEASON moment if you're talking global economics. But, in fact, the fashion world is all positive vibes, to go by the '80s vibrance and creativity on the runways.

One look I've always loved, which flowed through the spring/summer 2009 fashion shows like a cool breeze: long, light-as-air cotton dresses that are just perfect for the rising temperatures.

It's certainly a refreshing alternative to the cut-and-paste T-shirt, jeans and sandals look that seems to be the summer uniform. Whether a simple shift or a long, flowing dress layered with gauzy or chiffon, the key is to add splashes of happy, bright colors.

Think of red blues and sunshiny yellows, for a sunny, more confident and easygoing look. And the perfect all-back to wear this summer, whether on the beach, the street, or in an indoor café.

One summer look comes from no unlikely source—Paul Smith's. Some have hailed his spring 2009 show as his best women's collection to date, paired off with cotton-layered long cotton dresses. Meanwhile,



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Swatch summer collection

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An intuitive sensibility unveils exquisite proportions in the complex fabric and value of materials both natural and made by the human hand. A feel for similarities reveals translucent harmonies beneath the changing shapes of nature, the endless variety of co-

YOUNG stars Angelica Panganiban and Anne Curtis in Swatch summer show-off

Taking the Lead

See who's now much closer to home

Take an imminent leap into an unforgettable shopping experience as Power Mac Center, an Apple Premium Reseller emerges anew as it opens 4 more stores strategically located with Apple patrons in mind. The new stores in SM Marikina, SM Mall of Asia, Festival Supermall in Alabang and SM North Edsa Annex are now open and geared to offer great service for home and business users that includes installation, training and after sales support.

Because the customer's convenience is very much valued, Power Mac Center now has 8 highly accessible branches for Apple and Mac enthusiasts all over the metro. Also included in the line up of stores are Power Plant Mall, Trinoma, SM Megamall and its flagship store in Greenbelt 3.

Apple Products, software, peripherals, iPods, accessories as well as other premium specialty brands are now inside available for people on the go who seek dynamism and reliability in the products they purchase. More and more people have come to know the value of managing their active and demanding lifestyles through products that have become imperative in fulfilling their jobs or supplementing their recreational needs. This gives Power Mac Center the drive to continue creating more avenues for clients to access and discover the latest innovative products from Apple.

Power Mac Center is proud to welcome everyone to newly-renovated, more spacious stores with comfortable interiors. All Power Mac Center stores promise a wider selection of products designed for every customer's total satisfaction. With 15 years of experience in the Apple business in the Philippines, Power Mac Center is the source for reliable products and accessories of the best quality. Embrace a new, fast-paced and exciting lifestyle as Power Mac Center bridges the gap by bringing all Apple products closer to home.

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Light-as-air cotton dresses

From page C1

Richard Mirelli's show posted a cute collection of cotton dresses and shorts.

Of course, one can't discount Quiot when thinking of light, fun and feminine pieces.

This year's show featured scallop-edge coats, round-shoulder blouses and high-waist flared skirts interspersed with ruffle-embellished dresses. Prints—the brand's signature—were nowhere in sight. Instead, the palette showed a lot of chartreuse, beige, cream, blushed, green and apricot.

Even more cool, robot appliqués in the Pringle of Scotland's collection, which showed cotton dresses tucked and folded in square style at the neckline, while the waistband decorated with brads, stroke plaids in cobalt and turquoise.

As for shoes—add your heels with smidge open-toed sandals, which we don't in a big way. They're a perfect way to round up a pretty dress.

E-mail the author at fashion@inquirer.com.ph.

GREEN smocking cotton maxi dress

BLACK halter cotton maxi dress

ON BEHALF OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE BARANGAYS OF BUTAD, GALE, AND TUBORO IN BOHOL, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 6TH COCA-COLA GOLF CLASSIC.

TOURNAMENT PROCEEDS WILL GO TO GIVING THEM A REGULAR SOURCE OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER FOR THE FIRST TIME.

AGAIN, TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED, WE SAY CHEERS!

PLDT
Globe
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PRINTED black halter cotton maxi dress

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FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
D1

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

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The lowdown on lash extensions /F2

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YUPPIE close pals stunning beauty Miriam Quiambao with our Princess for a Day, achiever Heidi Mg

ALLAN Tee and Ann Gotchalian

JESS Sales and Hugo Gonzales

ROLLS Mg with beautiful Hey Montes Antonio and Pat Polayo

TITO Lopez, who joined us from the US

ELAINE and Royce Ng

THAI Airways GM Nirut Chantaratathod with Grace Glory Go, the retirement ceremonies dubbed as Bag and Heidi Mg, and Richard Tio

MAKATI Deputy with Pia Guanio, Joel Ong, Claudine Tolo, Arnold, and Sharmie Ong

LEUTA Venallo and hubby Juan Pablo Bartolini, with Mario Wenzarte

Doctor's mistress attends hospital's building inauguration

HOT WITH hunk actor Phil Younghusband and his production angel, eye-catching Joyce Ramirez, and Raul Manzano

RICHMANIAC AND lifestyle columnist, young achiever **Heidi Mg** had a great time at the coolthusiasm fly with her classy pals to celebrate another year of achievements, privileges. She flexed her new hair this shindig even if Don Moreno's token scarf of his Gran Don Hotel's Fabricante just opened its Ayala Center Cebu's Terraces, the world's tallest to our town's Greenbelt. Looking chic in her

HEADTURNERS Barbara Montes and Marites Bautista

THE HOT newfashired the world-class 7 For All Mankind's jeans Asia's vice president and general manager Stefano Sartori and brand director Wendell Dionisio

MAKATI Med Corporate Health and Wellness Center and Emergency Medicine department head Dr. Johnny B. Sison; Dr. Imelda Calvo-Villar, board MCP Diane Lauro and Phoenix Burger, and Dr. Rio Espiritu-Dulfuco, administrative officer-in-charge of Human, Education and Research Division

DR. FILOMENA Hernanda, co-chief of Stroke and Neurology Section, and Dr. Cristina Antonino, member, board of directors

HUNK Rocks with mom Lynn Hernado

BEAUTIFUL couple Rafa and Amina Amman Alonso

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arnaiz

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **YBL** Photo Solutions

Studio Board outfit, Heidi had a double birthday celebration with her best friend, Ambassador, Shee magnate **Richard Tio**, accounting while **Belinda Lee** and twins **Rolla** and **Bianca Ng** brought birthday cakes for the celebrators amidst prince of the nightlife, fashionistas, **Erik Gan**, and our Prince's tequila to the celebrants' tables. Thai Airways **Nirut Chantaratathod** served with Philippine Star's **Grace Glory Go**. Heidi's close pal, beauty queen **Miriam Quiambao**, flexed her stuff as she fawned in for her eye-grabbing tube dress. Popular **DJ Marcelo Dimlaquit** the night owl rocking 'til 2 a.m., on new time in Tagaig, to the relief of several insiders, siblings. Earlier that week, our Princess for a Day hosted a yummy dinner at the chic pad of talented chef, **Yves Pantaleon** and entourage **Jessica Cleofas** with newly weaned, beautiful **May Malicse-Antonio** who brought the metal shoes off set and chocolate goodie cake from Karen's Kitchen. It was the perfect finale for a fun and adorable dinner, palanggas.

Classic denims

Black, fashion and the arts finished together in 7 For All Mankind classic denims.

The Gallery at Greenbelt 3 was full of artists, famous boys and closeets for this celebration.

Top fashion designers like Kate Torralba and Noelle Hernandez exhibited the eclectility and harmony of 7 FAM clothes in a photo. Lensmanilla manned lensography in a video set light. Nikki Lucas presented sparkling silver set out from a bra. **Hideo Yamamoto** had a crisp white polo/hoodie slip-on and 7 FAM jeans. Vlor McGlinn, the also showcased their concierge clothings.

The hardworking gang of 7 was there, palanggas. 7 For All Mankind showed us the best of what they are known for.

7 For All Mankind is located at Greenbelt 3, Robinson's Place Malhoura Wing, and soon at Power Plant Mall.

Makati Med annex

Makati Medical Center recently inaugurated its Annex Building, palanggas. The modern, state-of-the-art facility underscores the institution's commitment to provide top-of-the-line healthcare services and to foster ethics, current medical challenges.

The event was simple yet meaningful. Hot namedropping golden Gke Makati Med Institute chairperson **Manuel V. Pangilinan**, guest of honor, Makati's dynamic Mayor **Jejomar Binay**; Makati Med's recording president, beautiful among the stars of power, **Rose Montenegro**; EVP-chemist for Professional Services **Dr. Manuel Fernandez**; and Makati Med medical director **Dr. Benjamin Almoneda**, welcomed the invitees, dahlings.

There was a lot of back going around, palanggas, when one of the doctors (despite his wife's presence) was seen chatting with his mistress. The woman was a patient of the doctor months ago. Love apparently developed and now they are having a hot affair. The rare smile is not meant of what's going on behind her back and on that day. Oh well, the wife is always the last one to know, di ba, palanggas?

Supporting this happening were Ayala Corporation's pillar of power **Arthur Zobel** the Ayala Department of Tourism Undersecretary **Cynthia Carreon**, South African Ambassador **Pieter Vermeulen**, American Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, **Abigail Bray**, and Makati Councilors **Ed Peña** and **Monique Lagdameo**, palanggas.

After a tour of the new facilities, yummy cocktails and finger food were served while guests listened to the lab performance of young local **Rachel Alejandro**, dahlings.

PEACHY Abiera-ang with Makati Med president Ricardo R. Montenegro, EVP's senior vice president and controller and banking head Dante Tiklin, chief officer Elmer Fernandez and Judy Roxas, members, board of directors, Makati Medical Center

THESE bankers officially launch visit to hospital's new donor: plastic surgeon Dr. Manuel Fernandez, EVP-director for professional services; Makati's dynamic Mayor Nay Jejomar Binay; and Makati Med's brilliant chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan

Maribeth Santiago's sweet taste of success–literally

BLACK universal blazer from Banana Republic, striped brown and beige cable-knit pattern dress (dress B) and Vivienne Rental's beige midriff-baring pants from Almara, SM Department Store

MARIBETH Rodon Santiago is the only girl in a brood of six. Being the only girl, she grew up protected and sheltered. Her brothers monitored her every move like they were a country terrorist unit, and did not let her go to parties. To get around their strict rules, she made a deal with her brother and chaperone Mike: "for as long as he could date his friends, she could go out alone. Smart! Of course, he agreed. Mine!

At 16, she married Chito Santiago, who was into movie production. He is the son of the late filmmaker and movie icon Chito Santiago, who built Premiere Films. I feel he knows better when he can't! Definitely. Did Maribeth meet his high standards of beauty? It would seem like it. For Maribeth, there all rounded to flattering: but in 1992, when after childbirth her weight ballooned to 198 lbs. Chito affectionately nibbled her and called her weight "cookie weight." Meaning, if she ate just one cookie, she would hit 200 lbs. Was she offended? Well, yeah—for about two seconds. So when she did see, she hit the gym and worked out three hours every day. She also imposed the "no dessert on weekdays" policy in her home.

THE WORKING CLASS

Rina Shayne Co, Corporate Director

But then, on weekends, she began to notice that her carrot-deprived family would worry to the chocolate blocks in multi and diverse unimaginably huge amounts of chocolates. Inspirations struck, and she decided to unveil at Barry Callebaut Asia Pacific in Singapore to learn chocolate design. From this was born what we know today as Chocolate Confections, Inc. Ltd. gino traffic business that specializes in customized orders.

Apart from the hours demanded by her chocolate businesses, Maribeth also puts in time and effort in her role as the vice-president for finance of Gift, a family corporation that manufactures street and traffic signs, as well as license plates. She is responsible for break issues and letters of credit.

Having lived in a house with six brothers, she became quite adept at playing their games, growing up fetishized yet attached to, like Sporty Spice.

Today she hikes four times a week and runs to Tomas in only 40 days. Her speedy workout has rubbed off on her children. Daughter Sam is captain of Ateneo's women's soccer team. Son Ian Lady is with Ateneo basketball team. A perfect way for them to stay out of trouble.

As sports and exercise are part of her routine, she invests heavily in sportswear. But while charming out her chocolate goodies, the perfect casual jeans and tank tops when she wants to look feminine, the chooses dresses that are comfortable but stylish. She prefers solid colors to it's easy to mix-and-match and accessorize.

Maribeth has managed to stay fit through discipline, focus, and hard work—the same traits that make her Summit Enfive, like the seventh and oldest inner-tube-fed, gino chocolate.

AQUA printed satin midi from Shapes, SM Department Store

Multi-Awarded International Chef Instructor Sylvia Reynoso-Gala will demonstrate her Most Treasured Family Recipes on QTv's "Secrets of the Masters" cooking show which airs on April 5, 2009, at 7:15 p.m.

ROYAL BLUE wide-collar belted cotton blouse from Vincenzo, beige twill shorts from Calvin Fersen, both from Rustan's

Walkway: Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

AN ARTISTIC, MODERN AND innovative interpretation of the traditional Via Crucis or Way of the Cross opens at High Street, Fort Bonifacio Global City on April 7, Palm Sunday.

The exhibit is designed to give people the opportunity to slow down from the business of life and reflect on how God demonstrated His love for humanity.

It invites residents, shoppers and visitors of Fort Bonifacio Global City to follow the footsteps of Christ from the Garden of Gethsemane to the Sanhedrin where He was condemned to death, to the cruel scourging and up the winding Via Dolorosa (Sorrowful Way) to the Cross in Calvary.

The Stations of the Cross will be presented on the almost 1-km. path area that runs at the center of the popular Bonifacio High Street mall.

The annual rendition of the Stations of the Cross promises to be an unforgettable experience, one that can move even the most passive onlooker to emotions and contrition. Its aperture to remember and contemplate what Jesus Christ did for mankind.

Performers of the Stations of the Cross" is a collaborative effort by Powell and Church Simplified in partnership with Bonifacio High Street.

Sponsors include Pinanse Inter Income, 45 Foundation, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Children's Cebu, 105.1 Crossover, Globe Bites and The Lord Red Box Kuwait, Kelgo Kitten, Pilla La Salle Green Hills Class of '99, and South City Church.

The week-long event will be held from 11 a.m.-12 p.m., April 5-April 12, with a break on April 10, Good Friday when the mall is closed.

Burst of color and print

SUNDAY'S CLASH UP SHIMMER WITH some of the best brands.

It is a burst of colors with an array of prints, with dresses from Diane Von Furstenberg, BCBG Max Azria and Guess. Bra pieces from Contrasteam, Nicole Miller, French Connection and Laundry by Shelli Segal complete an fresh look perfect for the summer heat.

Hot pink, bright emerald, blue and yellow dominate the collections of Calle Francine and Cristella.

Accessories to clinch the look are stunning beads knit from Sea Folly and transparent, bells to statement pieces from Betsey Johnson and French Connection, wedges, flamy shifts and flats in bold gold, bronze, silver and red, among others from Geneany, Signature Mavricios, and Bo'em Magic. Chunky bangles and layered necklaces are also hot.

Citi Hotels's Summer Escapes Fiddle package is running until May 20. A minimum purchase of P5,000 entitles you to a raffle ticket. Two lucky shoppers can win an overnight stay package for a three-day, two-night stay with Full meals at the El Nido Resort, Miniloc. Another 12 winners also get to have a three-day two-night stay at The Peninsula Manila with full meals and a single spa session.

Twelve Transcendo Horizon Luggage will be given away. There are consolation prizes.

All brands are available in all Rustan's stores.

PRINTED dress shirt from Diane Von Furstenberg; belt from Nicole Miller; hat by Scullfully and bangles from L'Dorbla

PRINTED maxi dress from Laundry by Shelli Segal, gold thong slides from Signature Morrison, and bangles and amber necklace worn as bracelet from L'Dorbla

Writing workshops

Lighting the Lamp is a Horizons: A Poetry Appreciation Seminar will be held today, 3-6 p.m. Pondering poet Dominique Ercampo Cuaresma. The seminar will give the reader a more familiar grasp of the poetic language that will help him read a poem with a broader and more creative mind, and hopefully facilitate new thoughts and opinions. Another two-part seminar will be held on March 30 and 31, titled the Personal Essay, will be held March 28, featuring writer Cathy Perez Lara. A one-day intensive/lecture course on the fundamental techniques of the personal essay. Remembrings will teach writers the student with the elements of essay, importance of tone and voice, and creative ways in generating ideas for a piece. All classes will be held at Trinity Bldg., T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila. Call (02) 5210000 or e-mail the event at ahseat@gmail.com.

Voice seminar

The Society Voice Club and Sociocratic Mind Management Consultancy and Executive Training present the 2009 Edition of Jacqueline Bernard's "Speakeasy and Singing Voice Workshop—Voice for Impact," on March 28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at The Corporate Mind Training Place in Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The course will tackle mechanics of voice production such as breathing, resonance, projection, etc., with many participants going through some exercises. Call 6407868 or 6921-2567039.

Empowering women entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurship advocate Dr. Jose shares stories and experiences of how to harness the inside power of a successful work-life success today, 9-4 p.m., at Global Command and Community Base Organization Office, 5/F Sandoval Center, Dasmariñas Bypass Rd. Dasmariñas City, Cavite. Call 9013385, e-mail jacobsjoseph@yahoo.com.ph.

Creativity workshop

A creativity workshop to cognizing will be held 9:00 at Bang St., San Juan, Metro Manila City, for children 5-12 years old. Transmedia artist Divine D. A. Tuanson guides participants in this workshop aimed at exploring values of resourcefulness, harmony, teamwork and integrity, all conducted in an atmosphere of play and heartfelt interaction. Details of the workshop will be revealed in the Artistic Gallery from April 20 to May 5. Call (1) 7248 (0) or 0917-8888776, e-mail ads@manilagallery.ph, www.com.

Earth hour

Iskwelahang Manila will join the Earth Hour on March 28, 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. Prince Albert Rotunda will offer patrons the option of candlelit dining at the poolside garden in observance of Earth Hour. In-house guests are being informed of the activity and urged to participate.

Mixed choir concert

Indonesian music student Rosalind Simanjuntak of the Jakarta Institute for Liturgy and Music (JILM) takes center stage as he conducts a mixed choir in rendering Schubert's Missa Sc. 4 in G Major in his graduation recital at the Universal Middle Church (UMC) on March 31, 4:30 p.m. Interpreting the Romantic Period piece are members of the UMC Shamal Choir, Crusaders' Choir, Vesper Choir, Covenant Choir and Piano Ensemble, with soloists soprano Lou Catalina Bayas, BH Ella Cecilia Bautista, tenor Frankie De Santos, and bass Jozel Del Prado, with pianist Michelle Rodriguez.

Celebrity squash

Celebrity Squash Day 2009 will be held April 19 at Manila Polo Club in Makati. Celebrities include Tonette Lloren-Gonzalez, Chiqui Melegrito, Richard Bunnag, Quintin and Blandina Henares, Louis Paul Weisloff, Angel Jacob, Gloria Rivera, Rep. Gilbert Remulla, Rep. Reynaldo Panlilio, Sen. Bong Revilla and Walter Thenissen.

UP homecoming

All UPSA college graduates of the University of the Philippines are requested to submit updated email that UPAA-SPIN on Friday Beagle Int. 8256868, 9256871 to 9256875, or e-mail updated address, etc. for the update. Jubilee Reunion coming on June 21, 4 p.m. at Bahay ng Alumni.

Librarians seminar

The Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines and Mold Collection Management: Current Trends, Practices and Future Directions, on May 5-8 at Sampaguita Gardens Resort and Spa, 309 Pilot St., Poblacion Mun. Muntinlupa, Metro. Call 403 3151, 8904888, 9064549, 9064543 or 7340851 local 115.

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Why women want it big

Medical reports link oversized bags to back and shoulder problems—but more and more women can't live with anything smaller

KATE Hudson, aka Mrs. Ben Cribbs, carries a Chanel bag at SFO/INQ

By Alex T. Vergara

SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE of fashion and beauty is nothing new. As if slipping into those killer heels isn't torture enough, a growing number of women have willfully—and literally—become the burden (and occasional shiny credit card killer) by lugging around humongous bags.

Despite medical findings directly linking oversized bags to neck, shoulder and back problems among women age groups (see sidebar on ways to avoid big bag-induced pain), women can't seem to outlaw big bags, in brands—from luxury to designer labels—into their wardrobes.

Is this just a prolonged fascination with big bags? Or don't women have a choice?

Our impression is we find ever more and more women load heavier from... smaller, their carry-alls with everything, from laptops to diapers—a big bag has become a necessity.

"Big bags have been around for some time," says Melanie Gurion, editor in chief of Look, the beauty magazine, citing such classic styles as the Hermès Kelly and Dior Bucket. "But brands started offering roomy totes and bigger styles as the world's on a shift in their lifestyles—more work, more gadgets, more roles." (See sidebar to find out what's inside those big, bold bags.)

What's more, says Gurion, big bags seem particularly with fashion. As fashion itself, of course, will be. "I always make it a point to put a puddle handwash and my son's thermometer in my bag." —Janina Annear-Ahmad, bag designer

"The biggest items I regularly put in my bag are a cosmetics filled with fruits and pairs of fingertip bolleras flats. Truth to tell, I don't remember to look food for roommates's cake, while the stylish flats are a quick relief whenever I'm panicked with pain-from walking in high heels.

"One time in Paris, I had to walk with friends from the Louvre and went the Pavé Seine to a club in Saint Germain. When I reached the club and sat down, my feet were really killing me. The Bajanitos, which I have slipped into, were heaven-sent" —Carla Abad, editor-in-chief, Mega magazine

"Whether I'm working or at work, big bags are very handy for carrying papers, magazines and books. In the mall, I do away with shopping bags by putting whatever I buy in my big bag. That's more eco-friendly. I also carry a mineral water and a camera. If the weather climates, I also put in a small umbrella." —Annette Perez, international flight attendant

"I can't leave home without my thirty-something-point book, checkbook, sanitary wipes, mobile phone and, of course, wallet." —Leah Cariaga, publisher

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Alex T. Vergara

DIANE Kruger (left) with a cross Chanel that could probably scuff half a dozen J.Lo's and Cameron Diaz with one of Chanel's more casual totes

What's inside their bag

The kitchen sink isn't in there—yet

THESE LADIES ARE NOT IN THE HUNT of making their bags deep—humble or seven-inches-thin-patented Chanel's and life.

Even with mobile banks or a wallet, lifestyle, lipstick, cell phone and even a laptop kept in handbags, there's still room left for items each woman can't seem to leave home without.

The kitchen sink isn't one of them. But on the size and range of purses become more and more today's equivalent of a portable apartment, we weren't be surprised if they finally do include it.

Here's a sneak peek into those big bags.

"Whenever I'm in New York I end up bringing an extra pair of shoes. I can't last a day wearing the same pair without getting calluses from all that walking.

"I used to carry a big makeup kit, but now I keep it most of the time in the car. I carry a tinted makeup bag with a blending compact complete with eye shadow blush and lip gloss.

"I used to carry a handy-cam and microphone just in case. But now, I use an iPhone to shoot my stories." —Stephen Cortes-Pons, broadcaster and producer, host of "Urban Zone"

"The funny thing is I don't really like carrying heavy bags. The heaviest (object), I suppose, would be a bottle of mineral water and a camera. If the weather climates, I also put in a small umbrella." —Annette Perez, international flight attendant

"I can't leave home without my thirty-something-point book, checkbook, sanitary wipes, mobile phone" —Melanie Gurion, editor in chief, Look magazine

Alex T. Vergara

LEAH Cariaga

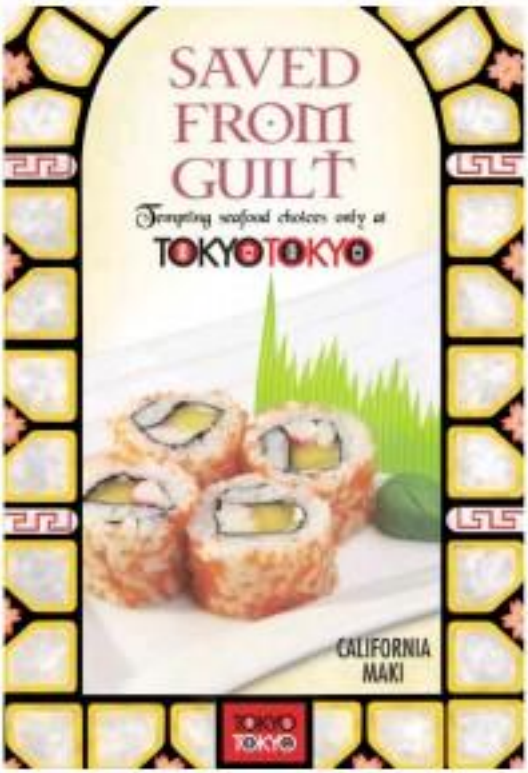
JANINA Annear-Ahmad

STEPHEN Cortes-Pons

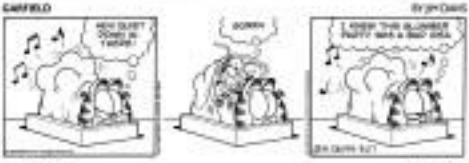
CARLA Abad

ANNETTE Perez

MELANIE Gurion



GARFIELD — By Jim Davis



A. LIPIN — By JOJO ABRERA

FUGAO BARDY — By RYL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEHONOTTE — By ELIZABETH CHIONGSO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — By STEVEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES — By JERRY SCOTT

TULOOK — By MARK CRU

MEN — By DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMO AND VEBOY — By LIRA-DANCILLANO

EXCO MACHINE — By MANOS ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

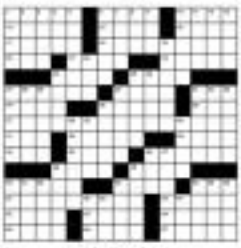
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't be overconfident today. If you're dealing with someone who is trying to take advantage of your naivete, you'll have to learn the lesson quickly. Be cautious, avoid romantic capabilities as well.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're coming on like a conqueror today. Don't overpower others in social circles. Be agreeable with others. Don't be too impatient with those who are trying to do excellent job and rewards.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Domestic affairs involving your surroundings can bring out the best in you today. Efficient. You could be your own worst enemy at work. Don't end up being a victim of circumstances. Be aware of others' weaknesses.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

	4					6		
2	8		9					
			1					3
	5	9		4				
			5	6	1			
				7		5	8	
5					2			
					8		1	4
		1					6	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	6	1	2	5	3	7	4	8
4	3	2	8	4	7	9	1	6
8	4	7	1	9	6	5	3	2
7	1	4	5	6	8	3	2	9
3	2	5	9	3	4	6	8	7
6	9	8	7	3	2	4	5	1
2	8	9	3	7	5	1	6	4
1	5	6	4	8	9	2	7	3
4	7	3	6	2	1	8	9	5

Why women want it big

PRADA patent-leather tote

From page B1

event, it also says a lot about the woman.

"A woman carrying a cute Hermès Birkin elevates high maintenance as opposed to, say, someone carrying an eco-friendly tote. The bag status thing also conveys the message 'I'm successful. I can afford it.'"

A certified bag buff herself, Curran attests to a big bag's versatility as she runs from one venue to the next on a typical day.

"A big bag has space for everything I need to cross from errands to meetings for an event, do yoga or check e-mail on the road," says Curran of her Givenchy tote and an older Fendi that shouldn't say laptop bag. "I'm quite outspoken when it comes to bags. Pre-Jennifer encounter, I was miserable."

Convenient

Broadcast personality Euphrosyne Doxiadis-Patel, host of "Urban Zone," agrees. She views her oversized bags—her current favorite is a Versace—as a convenient way to downsize on the street storage when traveling with her kids and their stuff.

LV NEVERFULL

Doxiadis-Patel, host of "Urban Zone," agrees. She views her oversized bags—her current favorite is a Versace—as a convenient way to downsize on the street storage when traveling with her kids and their stuff. That's when the bringing into her Prada dossier vote and swells it with diapers, wipes and other assorted items.

Dorina Pojar-saro, a fashion babe for everyday use. As the temperature rises, the wardrobes to a modern-day tote from Herve D'Exposition given by good friend Ingrid Ho.

She hasn't used her Coolsculpting Gerard 35 for over six months since Xiaxue first hug it structured and quite big, she can zoom speedily to the bags' cased to end up hanging from people and things.

"If a woman's big bag is filled with all her necessities, carrying one is purely for aesthetics," says Doxiadis-Patel, who sees the big bag trend emerge a few years ago among Ashway-dependable Nova Yankees. "But if she's lugging around a huge bag with barely anything in it, it's a fashion statement."

A classic case was when actress Kim Hubner was seen carrying the "mother of all Birkins." Being surrounded by bodyguards and assistants, she could have asked them to carry her bag-case luggage.

"She insisted on carrying that huge Birkin, which seemed half empty, perhaps just to make a statement. But I'm Birkin-shunned and can either envy the biggest Birkin obsessive I meet," says Doxiadis-Patel.

Practical, efficient

Actress-like publicist Lorin Cortegal, have been into big bags since high-school days, finds that, she says, the more "oversized" brands were Esprit and Benetton.

"I know of some women who carry small overnight bags as their everyday carry-all," says Cortegal. "It can contain laptops, folders, diaries and other necessities that are either too big or too heavy to fit into a regular-size bag. It's a misnomer way of managing your day."

Apart from a laptop, Cortegal has a pair of running shoes in her bag. This summer, she goes around with a neon white leather bag by Josh Temperley.

"I know I'm going to a formal event, small bags are just not practical for me," she says.

Global trend

Bag designer Amina Arraou-Alnaou has had to relieve the global trend of big bags in her designs in order to suit them. Her Queen Amidala-inspired collection that summer was noteworthy for its size and futuristic elements.

"Convenience has definitely played a huge role in this trend," says Arraou-Alnaou, who alternately uses her creations, and a YSL Big Shopper leather tote. "It's also a fashion statement that says you're bold, confident and won't shy away from attention."

Apart from convenience, Carla Sibol, editor in chief of Mega magazine, also blames the crazy state of Metro Manila's public infrastructure as one major reason women are drawn to bigger bags.

Her makeup and grooming kit competes for space in her Balenciaga bag with such basics as Kleenex, hand wipes, soap and alcohol. She also has to make room for a shoulderstrap, ID, cell phone, credit cards and a pair of "life-saving" Repetto ballerina flats (ultra-foam-cush) Cinderfoot loafers-in case it rains. Cinderfoot loafers-in case it rains. Cinderfoot loafers-in case it rains.

"If your lifestyle doesn't require you to carry a big bag to fit all these items in, but you carry anyway, it simply means you're a fashion victim in need of an 'It' bag as a validation of value you're worth," she says. "It pains me to see a woman carrying a designer bag that's almost empty and clothes completely with the rest of her look."

Lightweight virtues

So, has it become de rigueur to never leave home without it? Not really, says seasoned traveler and Philippine Airlines international flight attendant Jeanette Perez. In an era of random checks and limited weight allowances (even for flight attendants), it pays to fly light—and that includes your carry-on bag.

"We can manage to put everything in our regular-size bag if we have to," she says. "Having a big bag simply means having more choices. Carrying several lipsticks, for instance, instead of one. More often than not, a big bag simply encourages us to stuff it with's not-so-necessary stuff. Before we know it, the bag instantly weighs a ton."

In yet perhaps another of life's many ironies, when was originally meant to keep women's lives more convenient and in order, big, beautiful bags may in the end, weigh them down even more.

Pound-for-pound killer

NOT ALL BIG BAGS ARE created equal. Some are definitely cumbersome than others.

Apart from size, materials (save leather or canvas?) and hardware (those sturdy connectors often around corners) that often separate the fake from the genuine article determine a particular style's weight.

To give you an idea how much weight an average bag junkie carries through the day, we weighed a typical tourist bag as it goes practically around with essentials most women now deem as "essentials."

Girl, don't say we didn't warn you. The total is enough to make even an able-bodied mare balk. So what's why you can't find your keys.

Empty bag	2.0 lbs
iPod, cell phone, shades	1.2
Wallet, cash on hand	1.1
Book, travel itinerary, toiletries, bottled water	3.5
Beauty magazine and sundry bits	2.7
Total	11 lbs!

ATV

How they cope with big, heavy bags

IN AN ONLINE ARTICLE OF the Wall Street Journal, researchers can back carrying backpacks supported. Their load shouldn't exceed 10 percent of their body weight.

Because of the pressure it causes on the shoulder, the weight of women's handbags should be far less.

This was a member of British and American doctors worried. One UK-based chiropractor told her patients that [bob fully loaded bag should weigh no more than one to two pounds. In a related research revealed that "the burden on a woman's shoulder has increased by 30 percent in an average bag of 9.22 pounds. Within a decade, it's predicted to reach 6.6 pounds."

"The problem with carrying a heavy bag is that while it may not cause you an injury at the time you carry it, over time it has a cumulative effect. We've noticed moving more instances of back pain triggered as a result," says Dr. Tim Hamblin of the British Chiropractic Association in an online article by the Daily Mail.

"The worst case scenario is that you injure your neck by stretching the nerves. But carrying a heavy bag over one shoulder also causes you to repeatedly shift your body's stance so you like the shoulder up and, over time, this can shorten the muscles, resulting in a twisted or lopsided body position, that to exposed back or back pain."

In response to the market's demand for bigger, sturdier bags, a Finnish manufacturer even went so far as to ask its suppliers to strengthen the stitching and weight-bearing straps of its bags. Horse said the gym was one.

Such a move seemed to have totally missed the point. It's not the bag, but ultimately its user who would be struggling with the extra burden. If the rate of injuries continues to spike, it won't be long before the doctors recommend that bag makers issue a warning similar to the one issued by cigarette manufacturers today: "Lugging this big bag in the mall can be hazardous to your health!"

In the absence of a similar reminder in the Philippines, women are advertised more than enough to be aware of the dangers big, fully loaded bags exact on their health as well as on their posture. Here's how they cope.

"Like high heels, carrying a big bag can be damaging to your body. I heard that the one healthiest way is to carry one in the crook (along around) of your arm. I have a "Hollywood" approach to it—I have a clutch or minaudière for my essentials in my big bag. I sometimes leave the bag in the car and take the clutch with me for meetings and such," —Shrimpie Doxiosa, editor in chief, Look magazine

"Due to the heavy bag bags put on the back and shoulders, I've had to visit a chiropractor twice just to get my body realigned. Aside from causing back pain, it also throws off your posture. My doctor has advised me to try to cross-train by switch my bag from one hand to the other regularly while walking. When standing, he advised me to carry it in front of my body with both hands to distribute its weight." —Carla Sibol, editor in chief, Mega magazine

"I've pulled my back twice because I insisted on carrying a gym, laptop and file bag all at the same time. The pain isn't worth the pride that being self-sufficient brings. Now I have someone to help me carry my heavy bags, while leaving my own bag containing wallet, etc. less heavy, essentials." —Leslie Cortegal, publicist

"I remember getting back pains in my upper right side. I realized it could be because I was so accustomed to carrying heavy bags on the same shoulder. Now, I try to switch sides carrying my bags. Worse, I need to carry an oversized bag. I try not to load it up with things to lessen the weight." —Amina Arraou-Alnaou, bag designer

"I've long given up on big bags unless I travel abroad with my kids and those days are few and far between. To cope, I condition to edit the contents of my bags and leave the less essential stuff in the car, at home or in the office." —Euphrosyne Doxiadis-Patel, broadcaster and producer-host of "Urban Zone"

Alec F. Morgan

summer travelog

For a hassle-free and stylish trip — be it for business or leisure — total the Man's Accessories section of SM Department Store for all your travel essentials.

From deluxe to deceased

By Cleofe V. Floro

A fashion journalist's book predicts the death of the luxury industry because of commercialization and cheap gimmickry

SO YOU OWN A HUGE LOUD Vuitton bags, two dozen pairs of Gucci sunglasses, a vanity overflowing with Dior and Chanel cosmetics and a closet filled with clothes and shoes from Yves Saint Laurent, Marc Jacobs, Balenciaga. These days, they don't really mean much: in China alone, there are tens of thousands of others with those similar claims to status and also just like you.

REVIEW

That's essentially what journalist Dana Thomas is saying in her best seller "Deluxe: How Luxury Lost Its Luster" (Penguin Press, 2007, 346 pages).

The 2007 release of her book may have been prophetic, considering that two years later, with the economic downturn, what little flicker left in the luxury industry has all but petered out.

A compelling analysis and well-researched reportage on the rise of the luxury business, Thomas gives a jarring picture of what big-budget marketing and logo-brainwashing has done to what true luxury used to be.

Many of the so-called global prestige brands started out as the skilled hands of humble craftsmen creating the finest pieces for French aristocrats and royals. Louis Vuitton came from a family of farmers who, at 13, trekked for two years to Paris, where he apprenticed with a trunk maker. He set out to his own in 1854, eventually becoming the official trunk maker of Empress Eugenie. Hermès is now known for Birkins and Kellys, but its founder, Thierry Hermès, was only a harness maker in the 1800s. Such skills and traditions were passed on by the father to the son.

The Arnault assault

Thirty years ago, Bernard Arnault changed the course of luxury. He made it accessible to just about anyone who had the cash—or credit card. It was Arnault—chair and CEO of LVMH, owner of such brands as Louis Vuitton, Fendi, Christian Dior—who set the trend of acquiring those modest, specialized houses and brought them into the mainstream, into airport duty-free shops and glitzy magazine ads; who replaced generations of artisans with machines and factories of mass production; who slapped logos on just about anything and dragged the same on celebrities to sell the "dream." Thus, the birth of the economic "democratic luxury."

"Deluxe" is replete with juicy trivia and insider accounts that would interest anyone who owns or has owned a Prada. Thomas details, for instance, why a Hermès handbag, despite the glut of so-called "it" bags, is still a true object of luxury. "To see how an Hermès bag is made is to understand what luxury once was and what it is no longer," she writes. She recounts a visit to the Hermès special-orders workshop in a Paris suburb, detailing each step in making a Birkin or a Kelly (takes 15-20 hours), choosing the skins (they use only three types, from specially raised alligator and crocodiles), how each is assembled from inside out, all by hand. In contrast, she writes about Louis Vuitton's assembly-line handbag factory in another chapter.

Thomas has an inherent grasp of the inner workings of the luxury industry, having worked as culture and fashion correspondent of Newsweek in Paris from 1995 until last year, after which she was appointed International editor of Condé Nast Portfolio. She began her journalism career in mid-90s as assistant to the fashion editor of the Washington Post, and has written articles for New York Times Magazine, Vogue, The New Yorker.

Luxury cheapened

In writing the book, she visited factories in China where handbags are labeled with "Made in China" stickers, to be replaced here in Europe with "Made in Italy." (Production costs and labor is 20-40 percent cheaper in China than in Europe.) The same handbags, she learned, are sold in an upscale HK department store at 10 times the cost. She also reports of how factories use slavery by half-inch diameter to save money, or eliminate the lining in clothes. There's also a chapter on perfumes—namely the conglomerates' best-concocted product to give the everyman the easiest access to luxury. There are also interviews with the luxury industry's male players—from Bernie Ecclestone to CEOs.

Today, "The focus is no longer the art of luxury; it's on the bottom line," Thomas writes. "Designers—once the founders and owners of luxury companies—are now hired hands that are as disposable as the clothes and handbags they create."

Whether Thomas' exposés would dissuade longings for a piece of the luxury dream or not, who knows? But "Deluxe" is an enlightening, gratifying read. It's certain to change the way the reader feels the next time she reaches for that it purse on the store shelf.

CASUAL, QUIRKY FASHION

Liberti—a private label of Robinsons Department Store (ROS) unveils its newest collection of "casual, comfortable and quirky" separates—anywhere wear for the fashion-forward female who loves showcasing her own style. Liberti is available in all Robinsons department stores.

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Getting rid of unwanted hair

Tweezing, waxing, depilation—which one to use?

ACTRESS Angel Locsin is the new endorser of Facial Care Center's LaserLight.

I LOVE HOME SERVICE! I THINK I'm somewhat addicted to it already. I have most things done at home now, including waxing.

But, today I gave myself a treat—LaserLight at Facial Care Center, to have unwanted hair removed. I highly recommend the procedure...though, since I have low tolerance for pain, it did feel like ants were biting me. I had to apply Emla, a topical anesthesia available at Mercury Drug.

I spoke to friends who had the same treatment, and it didn't bother them. I'm going back in a month for my next session. Despite the discomfort...I do think it is worth it.

I suggest you scout around before having anything done on you. You owe it to yourself to check out the procedures and the clinic doing it, so ask as many questions as you want. It is your right.

Here are other methods of hair removal:

Depilation cuts the hair but doesn't take out the roots. That means you must do it more often. Shaving is good when you're in a rush, but use shaving creams always and never shave against your hair growth, because that's a recipe for more ingrown hair and ugly nicks on skin.

Depilatories I use. Once in awhile...

GETTY/AFP

KNOCKOUT! Ria Francisco-Prieto

ZO SKIN Health Collection

Reducing fine lines with retinol—in capsule

Moisturizers meant to hydrate can leave skin drier

By Ivy Rojo
Lifestyle Writer

BABYSMOOTH, WELL-HYDRATED, evenly toned, firm, strong, weather-resilient and disease-free skin: ZO Skin Health executive vice president Jeff Wong has it. This Singaporean-born woman, whose work has taken her all over the world, turns an unbelievable 30 as the end of the year.

"You can ask the girls here, they say my skin is so much brighter and better," says Wong, who was in town recently on several Ohuge's latest cover-the-creases topical anti-aging collection at Rustan's Makati branches called ZO Skin Health.

Featuring by ZO Skin Health's Oceanital Radical Night Repair, a formula that reduces fine lines and restores firmness and elasticity, Wong, who's been using the product for only a year, points to her now pore-less nose and says that texture is the biggest change in her complexion.

"If I can have baby skin at my age, it can happen to anyone," she says.

Formulation

The trick, apparently, is to awaken one's skin with retinol, an ingredient. Wong acknowledges, that is regarded in the beauty industry as both a blessing and curse. While known for addressing skin dryness, discoloration and acne, retinol has also been blamed for irritation and sensitivity.

"Retinol isn't necessarily bad...But its formulations may not be conducive for daily use," explains Wong.

Ohugi, whose ZO Skin Health line makes use of retinol, repackages the ingredient in a multilevel, time-released formulation to enable regular use sans side effects.

"When retinol is encapsulated, it doesn't irritate the surface of the skin," Wong explains. "But once in your skin, it opens up and releases retinol into your skin cells, thus awakening them. When skin cells are awake, they are able to function well."

ADVERTISING FEATURE

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1085 Series of 2008

3 beach babes bare summer secrets

THE CALL OF THE BEACH IS STRONG enough to get untrained and unused. Sure, we "prep" like there are guaranteed to make you feel refreshed and look stunning.

I asked three beach babes to share their summer prep secrets, from all-out fitness regimes to simple facials.

Isabel Bacon, Real-estate Exec

Bikini-wax

This is the perfect time to get established and trained especially for all you "non-virgins." Kindly leave smooth, hump-free legs and a bikini area that looks fabulous in a bathing suit or occasion.

Self-tan/Bake? Shining has become an inspirational cry of a woman's beauty regimen, and to be honest, the pale isn't at all a shade someone sees you see the results.

Fortunately is growing, given the variety of home products that are convenient and affordable, but keep in mind that Healthier-ness is not something you should do at home. It's strictly a salon procedure, as only a professional can touch all spots and crevices. The results will last anywhere from 10 days to three weeks, making summers holy at the core, before the skin's radiance. No amount of shimmering can be as smooth or deep.

Body scrub

Unveiled with a soothing, fortifying body scrub. The bounty-ness nourishes, helps eliminate unpleasant and ashy dry skin. Scrubs take-eliminate cellular regeneration, and hydrate and nourish the skin. They're usually done with a gentle massage, dry exfoliation, then a rinse.

Body Tattoo Tattoos, clothing Glitter Tattoo:

"I make my own sea salt, mineral and oil scrubs at home. Or use some readymade ones. Sea salt scrubs and masks by Sothys, Aha (Bastien's) or Pure (a local brand you can get in bazaars).

"Calle Tranter will also launch a BYE Spa line in March. It includes candles, lotions, scrubs, cleansing, and whenever I have a huge pimple, I go there to get it grabbed. If I have an emergency [event], if I have a shoot the next day, I get the pimple injected.

MODEL Maria Ozawa

"I also do IPL (intense pulse light) once every three months for maintenance. It takes away all the pimple scars, among others."

Facial

Sit down and give by having regular cleansing and facial treatments. Facials are rather skin. They involve cleansing, exfoliating and and in a relaxing massage and nourishing facial mask.

Xanylle Tolleghani, actress:

"I go to Bebe medical group. My skin used to be very bad until I did the whole IPL light treatment combined through it. Now I can only [Drugs] I and I [] which are the cleanser and toner for maintenance.

"Once a month, I have a facial. I love it. I'm always [] and whenever I have a huge [] and get a two foot stomach. It's a difficult duty. If you supposedly big and pull them, which brings you to Never risk your eyes.

Fake lashes—is out, something your eyes (or touching your face unnecessarily) is a. Beauty saves. The only time your fingers should go near your eyes lashes is after wedding and bedding.

While they're very lift and fun there out so they can dry naked and superstated. If you are inclined to rub, think of gland-to-stops in the realm equivalent of the bitter solution applied to the nails of drastic and intense it does the trick of keeping hands away from your face, leaving you with unblemished skin and the perfect set of lashes for days.

Next current one while I go back to the salon for my retouch.

Mariel Chua is former beauty editor of Cosmopolitan, Seventeen, and Glo Magazine Philippines. Visit her blog at http://stylebeachbaby.com.

Pretty in pink

Welcome summer with an unexpected pop of color on your lips

THE ubiquitous pink lipstick gets a modern twist with its bright, matte version. Try out both shade of the [pink] spectrum by selecting sunset hues than one close to orange, or opt for more purplish tones, like fuchsia or deep rose.

Versatile pink can easily take your look from day to night with minimal effort. If you look fruity vamp with just a hint of bronzer, and sophisticated with sleek eyeliner.

Kelly Hiu, Beauty editor of this week

The great thing about pink is that it can look stunning applied on any skin tone. The trick is to know what shades of pink will look good with your complexion. "The darker you are, the redder your lip color should be," said Lancôme's makeup artist, Delia Lanuza Hernandez. "If you are mestiza, fuchsia lipstick will accentuate your skin, and if you have light skin tones, a sweet pink like peaches or coral will look good on you."

The new formula of pink lipsticks gives an edge against because of its vivid hues and non-transparent consistency. An inexpensive way to try the trend, and to make use of your favorite color of sheer pink lipstick is by giving your lips a more opaque finish. Spray a matte lip liner in nude color and line the lips towards, making sure to cover the entire lip area. Then, top with two coats of your pink lipstick and lightly dab with tissue," explains Hernandez. "Adding a lip sealant on the lip over lipstick just longer."

For a vibrant, summery look, Hernandez suggests pairing your bronzed skin with a pale pink matte lipstick—the contrast will bring out the radiance of your tan.

The lowdown on lash extensions

Take the plunge and enjoy the mega-volume

WHEN I SHOWED THE GIRLS IN MY dad's house my newly elongated lashes, one of them exclaimed, "but Ms. Pahimulig!" referring to the massively entertaining mainstay of Wowowee.

"But here are orange," they added.

I must admit, there is a very fine line between looking extra-long fringes like those of a smoked cat like runway, and looking like a refugee on drag queen. It's all for looking like either, depending on the occasion. But for me, totally worthy. I'll choose the former in a heartbeat.

That said, I've been enjoying my set of lashes from Lash Extensions Salon (SM Aura Premier, Pasig, 497-3939; iLashExtensions@yahoo.com). True, they're a bit on the high maintenance side, but they look great.

If you're considering, your own set of individual fringes, here are some points to keep in mind—you might just be determined if they're for you—

Unless you're off to a children's party or is guesting on TV, leave the orange lipstick in the Polkwangs of the world.

Application

Each setup of eyelashes lasts a month. After, they're lashes—pieces by piece. So, session it takes a full hour and a half for more, for flutter-ness to apply. The surgical-grade bonding agent and dexterity of skilled technicians make for a safe and painless procedure, unless you're skittish and quick to tear up.

Mariel Chua, Beauty editor for Pep Style

Laugh

Drooling how long to go it comfy up to you, I finish it table and a vision of money to go all the way to the salon and left. Air Mindbullion? Take the [table] plunge and enjoy the unexpected wow. But matter having your hair tucked for hours on end.

Maintenance

This is the most challenging part. How you handle your setup could make or break the look. Unless you're okay with looking like you've stuck your finger in an electric socket, it is recommended every two to four weeks).

The slight depletion I've mentioned to be if that gland-to ladies come off with your natural ones. But volunteer or not you have fabulous eyelash thanking it sacrificing. Consider it a small price to pay for beauty.

Removal

This is the most [] part. Never, ever, ever rub or pick of a single eyelash (your natural is left to 90 days. That means, within this period, you'll have [] and grow a two foot stomach. It's a difficult duty. If you supposedly big and pull them, which brings you to Never risk your eyes.

Fake lashes—is out, something your eyes (or touching your face unnecessarily) is a. Beauty saves. The only time your fingers should go near your eyes lashes is after wedding and bedding.

While they're very lift and fun there out so they can dry naked and superstated. If you are inclined to rub, think of gland-to-stops in the realm equivalent of the bitter solution applied to the nails of drastic and intense it does the trick of keeping hands away from your face, leaving you with unblemished skin and the perfect set of lashes for days.

Next current one while I go back to the salon for my retouch.

Mariel Chua is former beauty editor of Cosmopolitan, Seventeen, and Glo Magazine Philippines. Visit her blog at http://stylebeachbaby.com.

Shaving grace

By Paolo R. Rosca
Contributor

IMAGINE, DOCTOR, THE FLESH, the aspiring physician in "Silence of the Lambs," could have designed this razor-like accessories himself. A razor that lets you and a latex-thing. Only it all it needs to work, after all.

Gossip the assumption in your teeth, select the chrome-handled to the contour of your chin, mouth for your breath's sake, then around the gadget as if it were a wound, and you've got a perfectly executed—gesture—says those bloody slip-ups or unsightly nicks and cuts.

A "shaving genie" for every grown man obsessed with his facial hair, the Gentlemen's Gossip gentlemen.com) is the award-winning invention of US entrepreneur David Bonge, who designed the device with the chin of TV host Jay Leno in mind.

Award-winning shaving guard promises the perfect goatee

A PERFECTLY symmetrical goatee

GOATEESEVER was designed with the chin of TV host Jay Leno in mind.

In June of last year, it was honored with a bronze medal in the Personal Care category of INPEX, America's largest trade show for new inventions, where it was also handpicked by Leno's producers for a special segment on "The Tonight Show."

Bonge created the Gentlemen's after years of struggling to get his own beard even on both sides of his face. "One day, I thought, if I've got this issue, other guys must have the same problem," he said in an interview. "I know how difficult it is to get it right. One little slip and your goatee literally goes down the drain."

With the help of his wife, Christy, he spent over two years perfecting the goatee-enhancing template. "My then-3-year-old Play-Doh, then we graduated to plaster," he said. "But would [Sharon] ever let me use my face?" it does take other guys more than the same [] and [] to achieve the right look

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Stanford study of students shows stress' effect on skin

It was done during exams time

By Howard Murad, M.D.
Contributor

HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT your skin? Can stress increase acne? Why is it that the week before your wedding or a day before a job interview your skin seems to have a mind of its own?

As the body's largest organ, your skin has a mighty job—and we often take it for granted. Your skin is the barrier between you and the environment. It protects every cell, nerve and blood vessel. It regulates and body's temperature while filtering out microscopic bacteria.

Researchers at the Department of Dermatology, Stanford University School of Medicine, recently studied the relationship between stress and acne exacerbation by evaluating changes in acne severity during noncommission and examination times.

The study confirmed that people with acne may experience more acne breakouts during times of stress. Changes in acne severity correlate highly with increasing stress, suggesting that emotional stress does have an influence on acne.

Researchers believe that it is the increase of glucocorticoids and adrenal androgens, both hormones known to worsen acne, that are released during periods of emotional stress. These hormones stimulate the sebaceous glands, causing excess oil to build up in your pores, contributing to more acne.

One of these hormones is DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone). A surge in DHEA can set ages more oil production and increase acne breakouts. While it is often called the "youth hormone," it has a common side effect—oily, acnelic skin.

As a sensory organ, the skin detects nuances in our environment and communicates them to the brain. The skin can also reflect messages transmitted within our nervous system through what Harvard University researchers have dubbed the neuro-immuno-cutaneous endocrine network or NICE.

HOWARD Acne Body Wash

Discovery of this network confirms that the functions of the nerves, the immune system, the nervous and endocrine talking place in our glands (the endocrine system), and the health of our skin are interrelated. If there is malfunction in one aspect of this network, other areas will be affected. In broader terms, it's a total skin: link that reflects health as well as disease.

What to do

1) Environment—In your treatment room, create a relaxing experience through music, aromatherapy and soft lighting. A few drops of lavender oil in the bath, a softly scented candle and quiet music, even if only for 20 minutes, encourage a peaceful state of mind. Even home décor can encourage tranquility through the use of soothing monochromatic colors, comforting fabrics and home fragrances.

2) Topical and internal regimen—Our products should reduce inflammation, increase cell turnover through exfoliation, offer protection, and most importantly keep the skin hydrated. I recommend an acne program that is both topical and internal.

Adding an internal component encourages more faster results. Recommended ingredients include Vitamin A to encourage cell turnover, B Vitamins to help with cell repair, Zinc to reduce inflammation, and purifying herbs such as Burdock Root and Yellow Dock.

3) Appropriate cellular services—all skin needs hydration, especially acne-prone skin. Put think we are hydrating the skin and our cells by drinking water, but that alone is a misconception. It's not the water you drink; it's the water you keep. My theory on water and acne is to maximize any way to the tissue and cells possible using the advanced apparatus, which reduces the chance of follicular rupture. The Water Principle is the method I recommend to keep skin hydrated internally and topically (topical hydrators are with humectant properties such as Hyaluronic Acid and Sodium PCA. Internally, take Phosphatidylcholine, plus Antioxidant berry acids like Oleic Acid) and Linoleic Acid to protect cells and repair, thereby smoothing and maintaining water in the cell.

Summer is all about having fun, leisure and outdoor entertainment! But, alas, there is also a downside about summer—dry, flaky skin and nasty make-up. Thus, some people dread going out of their homes under the intense heat and avoid any type of outdoor activities. Sometimes, they even shunned our up too much making sure that their skin would not be touched by the sun's harsh rays. But then again there become prey to sunburns, rashes and possible heat stroke with all these bundle of wrappings.

Here's a little summer beauty secret I would like to share with you—With just a slight change in your make-up routine, you can assuredly keep your face and skin looking fresh, vibrant and beautiful all throughout the season.

• **Sunblock is the key.** The secret to having lovely, soft and unclutched skin during summer is sunblock. For the face, use **Rivera Daily Sunblock Moisturizing Cream**. Dual-purpose, it not only shields your face from both harmful UVA and UVB rays, but keeps your skin soft and supple with every use. Leave-on for at least 15 minutes to ensure that your skin has effectively absorbed the moisturizing and protecting benefits of this cream. It's sheer and lightest matte finish also makes make-up application a breeze unlike the other silky greasiness that some moisturizing creams have to offer. For the body, use **Rivi Riviera Daily Sunblock Moisturizing Lotion**. Formulated with a broad spectrum of UVA and UVB protection and enriched with the powerful antioxidant, Vitamin E, skin is ensured optimal care and protection.

• **Try vibrant colors.** Summer dictates lively and vibrant colors for our outfits and accessories, so why not make-up? This is the perfect time to experiment with your make-up palette. Choose the colors that reflect warmth and vivacity of summer. Besides looking hip and trendy, radiant colors instantly brightens the face and bring out a youthful glow on the skin. For the eyes, use **Rivi Riviera Eyeshadow 13 Shades**. With its long-wearing formula, colors will always be rich and vibrant the whole day. It is also enriched with vitamin E, that keeps your eyelids and surrounding tissues useful dryness from the sun, especially when you go on extreme sunglasses. For the cheeks, use **Rivi Riviera Blush 10+ Shades**. This is a summer must-have to give you the right amount of warmth and glow to the face.

• Say no to greasy lipstick. Thick and heavy lip colors often feel like overkill once the weather warms up. Lipbalms are often seen as an alternative. But this doesn't mean you can't wear your lipstick at all! **Rivi Riviera Matte Lipstick** have several attractive nude to light-colored shades to make lips look natural, fresh and lovely without the unwanted greasy shine.

Can't get enough of beauty secrets?
Send your emails to tine.gabriel@gmail.com.

Noninvasive facial and skin treatments

Weekly Insider

Face and Figure Center Manila, a facial and slimming clinic in Ortigas Center, Pasig, offers skin and facial treatments and figure-slimming services. Treatments are noninvasive and safe. Among its services are facials, diamond microdermabrasion, chemical peels, pimple treatment, acne treatment, acne control, dermaroller, needle-free mesotilt, melasma removal, nonsurgical face augmentation, correction of nasolabial folds, flabby, adhesions liposuction, cellulite, face reshape and contouring, cosmetic body sculpting, radiofrequency. Face and Figure Center Manila is at 10/F Medical Plaza Ortigas Building, San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig. Call 7050070 and 7050050.

Lipstick with pheromones

Colour Collection Lipstick with Pheromones from Collectible Direct Selling Philippines Inc. now has an improved recipe that holds to give lips increased sex appeal and enhanced charisma. The lipstick also has Vitamin E to soften lips and prevent it from drying or chapping. It also contains sunscreen. Colors available are Red Pleaser, Flaunting Rose, Blush Flush, Deep Crimson, Impress Me and Soft Rose. Call the toll free number 1-800-10-FELIPH (1-800-10-3505771).

Lip shine

Oxley Phyto Lip Shine has 10 colors, containing pigments that shine on lips and become part of the lips.

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Bulgari fragrance

Bulgari presents Divine Green Jade, a new women's fragrance inspired by jade. It has notes of green mandarin, spring anise, white peony, pear blossom, jasmine, petalia, white woods and musk. Divine Green Jade is available in 30 ml, 40 ml and 65 ml. It is accompanied by bath and shower gel and body lotion.

Getting rid of unwanted hair

Photo page 11

Isn't shaving the hair and is good for the legs. The results of depilation can last for several days or weeks, depending on how fast your hair grows.

Tweezing is advisable for stray eyebrow hair and near underarms, but it can take time. Waxing, unavoidable, can be done in a salon or at home. I recommend Emjoi-es Salon for its bikini wax and the more advanced Brazilian wax.

Waxing is also good for underarms and legs, since it's cleaner and can inhibit hair's hair growth.

Tweezing is good for unwanted facial hair. Then there are rotary epilators, which are devices that rapidly grasp hair and pull the roots out. They are not that popular in the Philippines, since home service is so much cheaper than buying your own device.

If there's the trade: When it comes to body hair, it's no big deal, really, unless you are bothered by it.

SMOOTH, glowing skin courtesy of Lanolight

His own private Boracay

GARDEN tables from Our Home

By Raynel San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rony Hendiola

AFTER ONLY FIVE YEARS IN show business, actor Joross Gamboa has earned very tangible assets that are the fruits of hard work.

Before Joross was discovered on the ABS-CBN talent show "Star Circle Quest," the Gamboa name already glowing in movie lists a townhouse to their own home in a Paranaque subdivision.

"Joross helped buy this house," recalls mom Mona, a licensed real-estate broker.

The two-story, seven-bedroom Mediterranean-style home is big enough for Joross, his parents, and two younger siblings.

Recently, lovelist Bulgarian Coccy Gotidoa moved

Joross Gamboa helped build this resort-like family hideaway just south of the city

THE YOUNG actor helped his parents acquire this two-story home in the suburbs.

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His own private Boracay

From page G1

jamed up the living room, kitchen and dining area. A friend of Arnas' mom, Gotshka suggested a two-tone motif: red and yellow.

He gave the pebble areas a vibrant makeover by creatively recycling old designs and removing old decor pieces.

In keeping with the Mediterranean theme, the home also boasts a sculpture garden.

From his earnings, Arnas purchased the adjacent vacant lot and built a verdant garden—complete with fountain, gazebo and swimming pool.

Arnas' dad Vitaly, a government employee, has a great affinity and personally takes care of the bonsai and other ornamental plants in the 500-sq. m. property, says Olivia.

Arnas has dubbed the garden his own "private Boracay."

He explains, "The garden is my favorite spot. Sometimes we even have lunch and dinner at the gazebo. Pwede nito (It's cool here). I also love hearing the sound of the water in the fountain. It's relaxing."

He draws the fountain as the subject of photographs he took for a school project.

The third-year Mass Com student (at Southville International School) often does his school work in the garden, too.

"We have Wi-Fi, so I can surf the Net on my laptop from the gazebo," he says.

Arnas loves the fresh air and the laid-back lifestyle in the suburbs.

"I grew up in the south," he says. "My parents considered moving to Quezon City or elsewhere in the north, but I told them that I preferred to stay in Muntinlupa."

MELBA

JUNIOS built Arnas's gym just outside his room.

RELAXING in the TV area on the second floor

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ANTIQUE mirror is displayed alongside family photographs.

JOBOSS works in his art-filled room.

His own private Boracay

DMZ Makes cubes out of the elastic and trees.

TWO paintings by the self-taught artist

ONE of Joel's prized wood trees

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Editor Bonnie O. Valverde

Hathaway as Judy Garland

LOS ANGELES—ANNE HATHAWAY HAS been tapped to play Judy Garland on stage and screen. The 26-year-old actress signed a deal with The Weinstein Company for the project based on "Get Happy: The Life of Judy Garland," a biography by Gerald Clarke. AFP

DID YOU KNOW...

SHOW TIME

Side A jams with PPO

POP BAND SIDE A TEAMS UP WITH THE Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra in the concert "Symphony of Hope" tonight, 8 p.m., at the CCP Main Theater.

■ Pit Jan Isasi "The Spooks is in town for a series of mall shows starting tonight, 6 p.m., SM Megamall; tomorrow, 6 p.m., SM North Edsa; March 29, 3 p.m., SM Baguio; April 3, 6 p.m., SM City Cebu; April 4, 6 p.m., SM City Davao; and April 5, 3 p.m., SM Mall of Asia.

■ Joel Madela performs in a free concert tomorrow, 7 p.m. at the Basilosaf Mall Open Park, Libis, Quezon City. Call 6876778.

SIDE A's Joey Generoso

JEO Madela

Slip of th

HUNKY ACTOR TRIES HIS DARKNEST to behave in public. But among friends, he transforms into Jiovel and Tito Sherdeling combined, and even converses with them in Bandoyanese mixed-speak. Once, however, HA hit his pink slip limit, and stayed a guy expression at a press conference. "May guests?" Uh-oh.

Mall world for singer

It's a mall world for Mala Gromez, who grew up in a broken home, but who can count on a major mall chain as a regular venue for his concerts. Why? MG's mom is allegedly the "girlfriend" of the mall owners.

Dimik's true colors

Everyone thought Marko Dimitro was happily homo because he is married, but we might be got drunk and we doesn't a male talent! This is not really surprising, considering MD's past as one time lover of gay Glenn BA Executive.

Kapcas for others

Kapcas (not recently rebaptized to join a network project for needy children all over the country.

"Young Shit" hosts Lynn Hong and Regine Tolentino spent one Saturday morning in a hot warehouse, helping pack school bags for the 3-Pill Healing Edukasyon Program, a project of WKL and Girls Kapcas Foundation. The goal is to give school supplies to more than 30,000 first graders.

"It's always a good feeling to know you're helping, especially kids because we're both mothers," Lynn and Regine agreed.

Kiko Rustia of "Survivor Philippines," Precious Lara and Roberto "Buboy" Tiglao volunteered. Confessed how much the simple gift means to kids when they visited one of the brand-new schools, Dimpalit Elementary in Malolos.

"It sad to see how much they lack," said Pinkwell Lara.

"It's just school supplies (bags, notebooks, pencils, erasers, crayons) and we can see how happy it's made them!" Kiko Rustia noted as he played

Remem

tems, you can never really name."

The Bolgarov Nobodies dynasty includes Natasha's late director Tony Bolgarov, Judy Sarkastrom (Nipp'Tuck), Lyn Rodgerov and grandpa Michael Bolgarov and Rodney son. Natasha was married to Ben from 1999 to 1993. She is stepped out of the logs of hi-lyn moon. She wore Tony 1999 for her acclaimed pe as Tally Bowles in Joan Mc duction of "Cabaret" and co mirrors in several films.

Natasha's boys

On being a man to M Daniel, who were 16 and 1 study, at the time of the ma said: "I sometimes see my age or a mother. I hope I'm not old. Hey cool give them the desperate childhood. I ran away from stuff. I always w had loved and supported. I never knew how the step-fa without one of us being thre I had this crazy childhood because of Olivia the end."

When a reporter inquired hopes to see interested in ac retired, "I hope not. I wou this business as anyone. I remained. In do it, if it's yo that, you'll survive. I would on my own behalf."

"But, well see," the ol Michael and Daniel becom someday. Imagine, Bolgar guns in their boys—Dani the Bolgarovs. "My mom's younger son to be an actress she realized that what's wh to do—be one it was like a s son like you have no choi never follow in my foot... don't to me is because of opportu you must audition in the

e (pink) tongue

first brand Ambassador for the Philippines. She starts her tour of duty with the launch of the Smile Shutter technology and the new Sony Ericsson C510 Cyber-shot phone.

The 20-year-old singer/actress said her new designations was "unexpected, but quite a privilege." She explained, "Sony Ericsson's global brand ambassador is **Maria Sharapova**, the tennis superstar."

Sarah will also be involved in campaigns for the 8C Walkman line of music phones. "We're confident that [she] will draw people to our products," said marketing manager Patrick Lanuza.

One more for Angel

Another favorite endorser is Angel Locsin, and she recently got another one: the FH (Folded and Hung) Summer Collection, which includes swimwear.

Dancing castoff

LOS ANGELES—A high-scoring command performance couldn't keep Brooke Richards on "Dancing With the Stars."

The 18-year-old actress was eliminated from the hit ABC television dance competition on Tuesday.

"My daughters love my dancing," Richards said after she was eliminated. "It's been fun. (So) is huge fan of the show and I will continue to be." AP

nbering . . .

We must start young because that's important in terms of training."

Overweight child

"When I was a very little girl, I wasn't athletic and was quite overweight," Natasha began as she narrated a childhood steeped in cinema. "Since I spent most of my time was watching old Hollywood movies—the black and white ones—and I would just sit there eating cookies. I was completely falling in love with the stories, with **Marilyn Monroe**, **Judy Garland**, **Bette Davis** and **Vivien Leigh**. You project yourself into these worlds. Then I'd visit my father's movie sets and see costumes, lights, cameras and people working together. So do I have it in my blood? What is being around movie sets? I don't know. It's just what I wanted to do."

Perhaps one of Natasha's biggest joys was seeing her mother doing on Mikhael and Shenzo. "She's a very, hands-on grandmother," Natasha shared. "She loves playing with young children and being with them. She comes up to see us weekends. She plays tennis matches with my boys. They do doubles on the weekends."

She spoke lovingly of Liam and how well he fits in with the Hodgsons. "He gets along with them very well. He likes them all. He's much more of a solitary person than I am but he's a darling about growing up with having my family around."

When asked about any crucial plot element in "Evening"—a character worrying a man she does not remember—Natasha was quite emphatic that that was one aspect in the movie she did not encounter with her costar Mr. Liam. "I know I was marrying the one I loved," she declared.

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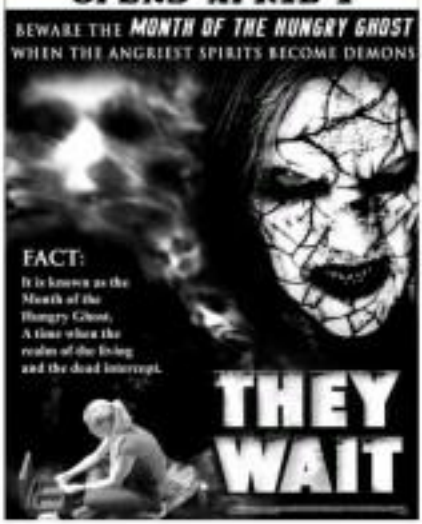
With the voices of Reese Witherspoon, Hugh Laurie, Will Arnett, Seth Rogen
Directed by Conrad Vernon, Rob Letterman

Monsters become unlikely heroes as they try to save the earth from invading aliens. Robert Wilonsky of Village Voice calls it "a milestone ... the grandeur of the effects..."

OPENS APRIL 1



NATASHA Richardson (L) requested screenwriter Michael Cunningham to add a scene with her mother, legendary actress Vanessa Redgrave, in "Evening." Natasha also told the producers, "This is a one-off opportunity [for us to] play mother and daughter, and you have to take advantage of that."

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

Remembering Richardson

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Robert V. Nefuzdes

LOS ANGELES—AS OUR TRIBUTE TO actress Natasha Richardson, who passed away last week, we are featuring quotes from our last interview with her, back in 2007, for the movie "Evening."

Natasha played one of the daughters of a dying woman, portrayed by her real-life mother, legendary actress Vanessa Redgrave, "Evening," adapted by Michael Cunningham and Susan Minot from the latter's own novel, was Natasha's last film with Jessica Natalie, along with Lindsay Lohan (then only 12) and Deirdre Quaid, were among our first Hollywood interview subjects for their movie, a remake of "The Parent Trap."

"Evening" also starred Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, Claire Danes, Toni Collette, Patrick Wilson and Mamie Gummer (Meryl's daughter).

Asked about the film's poignant themes of love, life and a dying parent, Natasha, who wore a fuchsia dress, said: "It just reminds you that you have to hold the people you love so close because they may not be there tomorrow, and you think every moment."

The actress, who was married to Liam Neeson (with whom she had two sons) added, "I really do feel that even though I've had very difficult times in my life which people don't know about—and they shouldn't know—I am one person who makes up every day and think how lucky and privileged I am. I just really believe in living life to the fullest. I'd rather live 10 years less but always in the moments, than have 10 years more always kind of being careful. So that's how I am—really living every single moment."

Beautiful scene

She almost didn't accept the role of Constance in "Evening," Natasha explained. "Toni Collette (who played one of the two daughters) and my music were set to do the movie long before they offered me a part. When I read it, I thought, ah, I love this script. I even cried. But I was like, there's something missing in this part of Constance. That has the most interesting part. There was no room for me. I was disappointed and stuff. I told the producers, 'This is a one-off opportunity that we're going to play mother and daughter and you have to take advantage of that. There has to be a moment for (actress) us. If you feel it's right for the script, write a scene for the mother and daughter to explore that connection. Then I will do the movie.' So Michael Cunningham wrote that beautiful scene."

Asked how a certain line uttered by her character soundsso convoluted to the well-shrouded observer (of "Dorma for a certain part of her lonely childhood, Natasha replied: "Obviously, it expresses you and your past. It has to do with the moment of saying, 'I want you back,' meaning, it had to do with a particular time in my childhood with my mum when she wasn't around very much. It feels perversely good to give to a film like this. There's loads of things just resonates with a lot of parents, with a lot of mothers and daughters. I'm glad there was a place for it. It just almost how wounds heal. It does for Constance. She forgives her mother. I certainly forgive my mother because even though we were through a difficult time, she was a great mother and a remarkable one. I hope I do as good a job with my sons."

"It wasn't all my childhood....It was for a period of it," Natasha clarified to the absence of her mother, who was busy with her acting career and political causes. "It is poignant because you can never take time back and do it over. It is poignant for her and myself. But the point is, we have—each other now. She's such a remarkably selfless person that she can make one feel positively selfish or inadequate."

First with Vanessa

Natasha recalled the first time she worked with Vanessa: "I was 22. We did a play together. I was very intimidated and scared. Then, as I've gotten older, I don't feel that way about her. There's this thing with my mother. You feel like she's looking into your soul. In scenes are much more critical of other actresses....all the nuances. You are where someone's faking it and when someone's not. In one of the scenes we had together, in the beginning I was like, 'I hope she's going to think I'm OK.' But then you let go of that because if you get self-conscious as an ac

CLICK!

'11th Hour' mystery

"ELEVENTH HOUR" is about Jonah Hind (Rufus Sewell), brilliant biophysicist and special science advisor to the government.

Hind is summoned at the eleventh hour when seismic disasters and break-ins are aborted and initiated by ill-meaning people.

Hayley Shelton co-stars as Special Agent Rachel Young.

The series airs 9 p.m. Wednesdays on CTS Origin.

RUFUS Sewell and Hayley Shelton